

May 2021

From the Director's Desk

The month of May is my favorite month in the year. I enjoy the warmer temperatures and the longer days it brings. Just as the saying “April showers bring May flowers”, I feel that we are starting to see the sun shine on our communities as we see the clouds clearing from the pandemic that we have been in throughout the past year. This past year has been a whirlwind of growing and learning about how to deal with the ongoing pandemic, how to transition our programs from in person to a virtual format and now how to return to a more normal, face-to-face approach again. As meeting occupancy requirements relax in the state, we are excited to offer some in-person educational opportunities for our clients. We have begun implementing in person programs for both youth and adults and will have even more available in the coming months.

We are excited for the opportunity to resume normal in person operations but we have grown many new friends and clients from the virtual world that we certainly do not want to leave behind. Many of our new programs will allow participants to choose between an in person attendance option and a virtual option. Some of our sessions will be recorded and shared online as well.

As always, please let us know if you have any special program requests or if you have a question that one of our agents can answer, please call or email them and they will respond accordingly. We hope to see you soon.

Montgomery County is partnering with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services on the launch of the **Visit NC Farms** App. The app is designed to connect the dots within each community across North Carolina. With maps, lists, and search functions, users can find farms, farmers markets, and local restaurants with foods and activities that interest them, all in their own backyard.

During these past months, the app has been a great tool for people looking for local food in their communities. Many farms have added farm stands and other ways to sell their products. The app has connected these farms with customers, both at home and across the state.

NC Cooperative Extension is pleased to be leading and coordinating this agricultural economic development project, and we hope that you will consider taking advantage of the **Visit NC Farms**. Please download the app on your phone today and check out all you have been missing.

For more information on how you can connect your farm or agribusiness to the community, contact Kaitlyn Lamaster, Jamie Warner or Chrissy Haynes.

You may also visit the website at: visitncfarmstoday.com



4-H Happenings in Montgomery County

Tracy Blake, 4-H Youth Development

Embryology School Enrichment Program



This month, incubators were distributed to all 2nd grade teachers in Montgomery County Public Schools for the 4-H Embryology School Enrichment Program. All teachers were provided virtual training via zoom and received curriculum to accompany the incubators. The embryology curriculum provides a hands-on approach to teaching students about the stages of embryo development and aligns with the second-grade Essential Standard— Structures and Functions of Living Organisms. Ten quail eggs were set in each classroom Monday, April 19, and after 23 days of incubation, students should be able to observe hatching on Wednesday, May 11. We were excited to be able to offer this program in-person for students, and hope each classroom has a great hatch!



Southeast Regional Chicken Show



On Thursday, April 22, 2021, two participants represented Montgomery County 4-H at the Southeast Regional 4-H Chicken Show at Bladen Community College.

Madilynn Bowles participated in the junior division and received 5th place in the showmanship with her Rhode Island Red, “Roseanna” and 3rd in the breed competition with her Barred Rock “Brittany.”

Brady King participated in the Cloverbud division and received a participation medal in the showmanship with his Barred Rock “McFlurry” and 1st place in the broiler competition with “Sunny.”

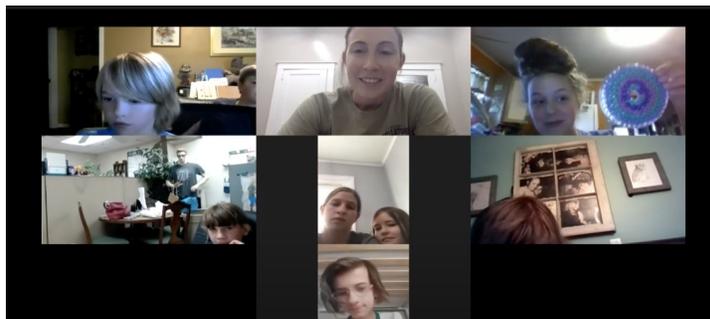


Congratulations showmen, for an outstanding job representing Montgomery County 4-H!

Interested in participating in the show next year? Contact Tracy Blake (tracy_blake@ncsu.edu) or Jamie Warner (jamie_warner@ncsu.edu)

Be You Virtual Meetings

The April Be You Montgomery Meeting focused on public speaking, and gave youth the opportunity to present their up-cycle projects they had designed since the previous meeting. The youth did a great job and came up with some very creative designs. There were maracas made of up-cycled easter eggs, beans, and plastic spoons, a nautical themed night-light made of a mason jar, shells, fish rocks and a tea light, and a sun catcher made from an up-cycled CD, just to highlight a few.



The final Be You Montgomery virtual meeting of the Spring will be held Monday, May 24th at 6PM. We will be discussing Summer Safety. Meetings will resume in August. To register: <https://forms.gle/GTjik95r9cJEjTsH6>

For more information regarding Montgomery County 4-H Programs or to register your child (ages 5 – 18) in 4-H,

please contact Tracy Blake, 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent at (910) 576-6011.

Empowering Youth & Families Program Updates

Sara Little, EYFP Program Assistant

May brings us to the halfway mark for our EYFP Program. We have one more session to complete the first half of our program which is the Powerful Families portion. After this section is completed, we will shift gears and begin our Powerful Communities Sessions.

In the Powerful Family sessions, our families have learned about what causes stress and appropriate ways to dealing with it by using reflexive listening, how youth can make safe choices, the expectations caregivers have, and how they can help manage their youths' emotions, the social influences our youth have, and the expectations caregivers have for peer relationships.

Each week our families have been provided games to promote family time. They have also participated in family assignments working together to establish a family motto and family expectations.



Family & Consumer Sciences Updates

Rhonda Peters, FCS Agent

Elizabeth Thompson, Nutrition Educator

Cooking With Extension



We are excited to be partnering with Troy-Montgomery Senior Center to provide live cooking demonstrations through Facebook LIVE. Many older adults find it challenging to prepare healthy meals for just one or two people, and especially when they attempt to make it budget friendly at the same time. Convenience foods and frozen dinners can be good options, but often contain excess sodium and less nutritional content. During our second session, we learned how to make meatloaf in a mug – a perfect portion for just one person, with the extra benefit of a very limited mess to clean up. Our segment airs on Facebook Live on the 2nd Wednesday of every month. Make sure to follow Troy-Montgomery Senior Center on Facebook to join us!

LIFTing Possibilities – By increasing strength, flexibility and balance, all adults can increase their overall wellness. We will be conducting a LIFT “preview” series every Monday in May at Dover Baptist Church. We have also kicked off another virtual 8 week session via Zoom. This series is being offered through partnership with six FCS agents across the state. We have a total of 90 enrollees so far, and are excited to see the impact this program will make.



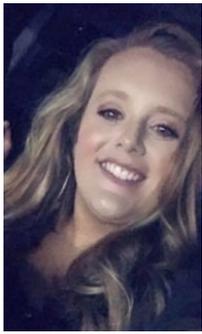
Your Credit Score Matters – Whether you are talking about buying a major purchase like a home or a car, or

CREDIT SCORE



a small purchase on a credit card, your credit score matters. The better your credit, the more likely you are to be approved for a loan, to have a better finance rate, and pay less money overall throughout the life of the loan. The bottom line – higher credit scores save you money!!! Does your credit need help? How do you know? The first step in improving your score is to know where you're at. Everyone is entitled to a FREE copy of their credit report every 12 months from each of the three major credit reporting companies

(Equifax, Experian and Transunion). You can request your free copy at www.AnnualCreditReport.com or by calling (877) 322-8228. Stay tuned for more tips!



Elizabeth's Nutrition Nuggets

The month of May is Physical Fitness month and Sports month. It is designed for Americans to promote a healthy lifestyle and to be active to improve our quality of life. Being active no matter if it is a simple walk with a friend or a family member, or even a full on workout in the gym (or outside) will improve how you feel during the day and how you sleep at night. For the month of May, I challenge myself along with you to pick up a sport or join a group. Working out or walking with a group of people helps to motivate each other and have fun while doing exercises or walking.

You do not have to spend a dime to stay active. The weather outside is finally nice and is the perfect time to head outside and go for a nice walk, plant a garden, or throw the ball in the yard for your dog. Even if you are not a huge fan of the outdoors or it is too hot, you can always go for a good game of bowling. Doing simple leg lifts, knee raises, arm curls in the house is also good way to stay active inside. Try to get 30 minutes a day if you are an adult, even broken down into 10 or 15-minute increments if it's easier for you. If you are a kid/teen you should try and get 60 minutes a day.

After you get a nice walk in or exercise, you may want to try eating some protein to rebuild and repair your muscles. Proteins include lean meats, poultry, fish and seafood, and eggs. Here is a yummy Aloha Chicken Salad recipe that you could try with family and/or friends.

Aloha Chicken Salad Recipe:

This healthy recipe comes from NDSU Extension Service.

Ingredients

- 1 (15-oz) can mandarin oranges
- 1 c. pineapple chunks
- 3 c. diced cooked chicken without skin
- 1 c. chopped celery
- 1/2 c. toasted slivered almonds (optional)

Dressing

1 cup reduced fat mayonnaise or salad dressing
 ½ teaspoon salt
 1 tablespoon orange juice



Directions

Drain fruit. In large bowl, mix all ingredients with the dressing. Chill.

Makes 6 servings.

Per Serving (with almonds): about 400 calories, 25 grams (g) of fat, and 20 g carbohydrate.

Per Serving (without almonds): about 315 calories, 18 g of fat, and 18 g carbohydrates.

Agriculture Updates

Kaitlyn Lamaster, Extension Agent, Horticulture

Montgomery County Beekeepers



The Montgomery County Beekeeper's Association met in person April 15th at MCC in the large meeting room. This had been their first in-person meeting since October!

The Beekeeper's discussed the tri-national Mite-a-thon event, sponsored by and partnered with a variety of organizations.

This event, taking place across two one-week spans, is used to assess the infestation rates of Varroa mites in honey bee colonies. Beekeepers are asked to follow traditional testing methods and submit their data online. All beekeepers are encouraged to participate! North American sampling dates run from May 1st-May

16th, and August 14th-August 29th. For more information, please visit: <https://www.pollinator.org/mitesathon>

The Montgomery County Beekeeper's also held their raffle for the Nuke frame give-away. Jennifer Hare was the lucky recipient of the beekeeper's raffle, and the association managed to raise over \$600 for their scholarship fund! The scholarship is designed to help get a new beekeeper started each year along with providing them with an experienced mentor. Thank-you to all that contributed to the fundraising event!

The next Montgomery County Beekeeper's meeting will be May 20th at 6pm.

If you are interested in attending future meetings or learning more about the group, please contact Kaitlyn Lamaster at kaitlyn_lamaster@ncsu.edu.

Montgomery County Master Gardener's

The Montgomery County Extension Master Gardeners met in a hybridized format on May 5th to discuss upcoming volunteer and education opportunities. The group also discussed getting the Montgomery County NC Extension Master Gardener Association Facebook page updated so the public can keep up with all of the work and events they have been participating in!

A BIG congratulations is in order to all of the new Master Gardener Interns, who have just taken and passed their final examination! All students that were enrolled in the course passed the exam their first try, leaving the instructor with a sense of pride in the new "official" Master Gardener Interns!

The Master Gardener group was set to hold a plant sale April 24th and May 1st. Unfortunately, the April 24th day was rained out, so the Master Gardeners decided to run the sales May 1st and May 8th instead. The May 1st date was a huge success, with many people coming out to show their support and purchase a variety of houseplants, garden plants, and herbs. Master Gardeners are hoping for another successful weekend sale on May 8th! In preparation for Mother's Day, Master Gardeners have prepared flowering hanging baskets and will have a variety of other blooming plants in addition to the traditional garden plants. Come by the Montgomery County Cooperative Extension Office May 8th from 9-1PM to support the Montgomery County Master Gardeners and take home some new plants for your home or garden!

The Master Gardeners have started volunteering out at the STARworks Center for Creative Enterprise Pollinator Garden. Tasks have included weeding, watering, and planting transplants to help get the garden ready for the influx of summer pollinator species! Additional volunteer help is always welcome. Contact information to join the group can be found below.

The group plans to meet on Wednesday, June 9th at 1:00PM. The meeting will be hybridized to allow a small group to meet in person and others to join in virtually. Starting at 1:30PM, the Montgomery County Extension Horticulture Agent will go over how to use the Master Gardener Plant Tool-box.

If you are interested in joining the group or learning more about the Master Gardeners and what they do, please contact Kaitlyn Lamaster at kaitlyn_lamaster@ncsu.edu or call 910-576-6011 ext. 26.



Establishing a Pollinator Garden



ESTABLISHING A POLLINATOR GARDEN

Why and how to plant a pollinator-friendly garden

APRIL 22ND

12-1 PM

VIRTUAL - REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

Register at <https://www.ncsu.edu/extension/extension-events/>

Cooperator of Cooperative Extension Learning at <https://www.ncsu.edu/extension/extension-events/>

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

The Montgomery County NC Cooperative Extension Horticulture Agent held a virtual education event to discuss why and how to establish a pollinator garden at home. Focus was placed on how to select plants that will best benefit pollinators as well as some examples of plants that folks in the Piedmont can utilize. A large emphasis was placed on native plants, as these are the plants that we see benefitting our pollinators most reliably.

For anyone that missed the event but would like to learn more about pollinator gardens, contact Kaitlyn Lamaster at kmlamast@ncsu.edu or call the Extension Office at 910-576-6011.

Agriculture Updates

Jamie Warner, Extension Agent, Livestock

USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers: U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack announced the USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative which will reach a broader set of producers than in previous COVID-19 aid programs and will put a greater emphasis on outreach to small and socially disadvantaged producers, specialty crop and organic producers, timber harvesters, and support for the food supply chain and producers of renewable energy, among others. Visit <https://www.farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance> frequently for the latest updates on this critical initiative.



Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) Deadline Extended: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will continue to provide additional assistance through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). Montgomery County is serviced by the Area FSA office located in Lee County. For help from this FSA office contact Marlo Dunn, County Executive Director at 919-775-3407 Ext. 2 or marlo.dunn@usda.gov. All USDA Service Centers are open for business but you are encouraged to schedule an appointment. Please visit [farmers.gov/cfap2/](https://www.farmers.gov/cfap2/) apply for more information

Farms, Food and You Podcast: Dr. John Dole, Associate Dean of NCSU's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, talks about what the College is doing to fill the 59,000 jobs that open in the various fields of Agriculture each year. This episode, "Filling the Rising Need For Ag Grads" as well as past episodes can be accessed here: <https://cals.ncsu.edu/farms-food-and-you/>.



Agriculture Awareness Week Returned to the NC State Brickyard: The Ag Awareness Week celebration sponsored by Alpha Zeta Agriculture Honors Fraternity has become an annual event that many look forward to on the brickyard every year. Live animals, tractors, the Agriculture Olympics and the Kiss-A-Pig contest/fundraiser are all highlights of the week-long event. Last year, due to the COVID pandemic, the festivities had to be canceled but this year, it was back and very much enjoyed. This year, the brothers of AZ earned \$1,600 with their online silent auction. This money was then donated to the Feed The Pack food pantry which supports food insecure students, faculty and staff throughout the year



Sesame Research In NC: The North Carolina Department of Agriculture has funded a two-year \$63,000 grant to determine whether or not Sesame could be a new and profitable crop for farmers in the state. Researchers are looking at this seed crop as a possibility for NC growers due to its low input, the ability for farmers to use existing equipment, heat and drought tolerance and it's seeming resistance to the root-knot nematode. Field research is already underway with a plan to showcase the crop at a summer grain field day and present results at a winter field day in 2022. It's safe to say that Sesame is "On A Roll" here in NC.



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Ask Extension

The North Carolina Cooperative Extension is a service that is meant to help serve the general community, both professionally and personally. If you have questions regarding any topic within Horticulture, Livestock, Family and Consumer Science, or Youth Development please do not hesitate to reach out! The office can be called at 910-576-6011 and your question will be directed to the agent that best fits your category. Emails can also be sent directly to agents that you feel would best know the answer. It is a good idea to include pictures if you have a specific situation at hand. The list of agents can be found at <https://montgomery.ces.ncsu.edu/people/>.

STAY UPDATED!!!!



If you haven't "liked" us or "followed" us on Facebook, take the time to do it today! Our facebook and webpages are updated regularly with news articles, posts, and pictures of current and future programs as well as news you can use. Find us at <https://www.facebook.com/North-Carolina-Cooperative-Extension-Montgomery-County-117219574995061/> and on our website www.montgomery.ces.ncsu.edu. If you would like to be added to our email distribution list, please email Kim_Gibson@ncsu.edu

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