

March, 2022

From the Director's Desk

The Montgomery County Cooperative Extension Staff is committed to serving the citizens of Montgomery County in the areas of Agriculture (Livestock and Horticulture), Family and Consumer Sciences and 4-H Youth Development. If you are unfamiliar with any of our programs, please stop by and visit us at 203 West Main Street, Troy. We would love to share all that we have to offer with you in person. We hope that you will take the time to read through our newsletter and reach out to us with any questions you may have or register for one of our upcoming programs.

What is the NC Farms App?

The App provides a very simple, mobile and user-friendly way for visitors to find local destinations to shop, eat, learn and enjoy what makes North Carolina a great place to visit. It was developed by the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the purpose of this app is to connect local residents and visitors to farmers and locally grown products from across the state. Anyone can download the free app.



Why should I list my farm on the Visit NC Farms App?

Showcasing your farm on the app allows you to reach a broader audience of potential customers and repeat patrons.

You'll be listed among an expansive and ever-growing collection of agriculture-based offerings.

With both a map and a list view, users will be able to easily find the farm closest to them or filter based on offerings.

Your farm listing will feature a brief summary, engaging imagery, and push button shortcuts to call, visit your website, or get directions.

User and member feedback ensures that the app stays relevant and up to date.

Your farm listing gives you access to real-time marketing opportunities through push notifications to app users.

If you are a farm in Montgomery County interested in including your business in the Visit NC Farms App, please give us a call at (910) 576-6011.

Air Fryer Classes Offered in the Community

Over the past week, we have been so excited to host three air fryer classes offered through the partnership of North Carolina Cooperative Extension and Better Together Montgomery. Our Extension Director Chrissy Haynes and our Family and Consumer Science Agent Rhonda Peters worked with more than 60 adults in the Brutonville and the Peabody communities to learn about the health benefits of cooking with an air fryer and

how to seek and find trusted and nutritious sources for recipes and healthier meals.

We were able to conduct a chicken nugget demo as part of the experience and learned about ways to prevent cross-contamination to reduce the spread of food borne illness.

We also distributed our "Recipe Roundup" printed cookbooks made up of all the healthy recipes submitted during our summer contests.

Project partners for Better Together include Montgomery County Partnership for Children, North Carolina Cooperative Extension - Montgomery County, Montgomery County Department of Health and FirstHealth of the Carolinas.



Agricultural Updates

Kaitlyn Lamaster, Horticulture

Tracy Blake, Livestock

Montgomery County Master Gardener Program

The Montgomery County Master Gardener Volunteers tackled some old fruit trees on February 9th to help give them shape and control the fruit set for better production and tree longevity.

The next Master Gardener Meeting will be March 7th at the Montgomery County Cooperative Extension Office at 1PM. If you are interested in joining the Master Gardener Program, contact Kaitlyn Lamaster at 910-576-6011 or email kmlamast@ncsu.edu



Peach Pruning

February is an optimal time to prune a variety of fruit trees and shrubs at the varying stages of their maturity. One of the most well-known fruits of the county – the peach – is no exception to this preference.

The fruit of the peach tree forms on red wood, found at the tips of the tree. The amount of redwood can be manipulated to influence the amount of fruit that a tree is able to produce. In turn, this allows the tree to focus on a fewer number of fruiting sites, directing water and energy towards the blossoms which results in larger, better tasting fruit. It might seem like overkill, but quite a bit of the wood on peaches should be removed for optimal peach production – about 40%!

The other goal of pruning a peach tree is to keep an open center. This helps sunlight penetrate through the canopy and reach more leaf surface, providing more energy for the plant. Care can also be taken while shaping to enable fruit to form at an optimal picking height.



Though it may seem daunting, one of the best ways to view this annual routine is to believe that pruning is both an art and a science.

For more information on pruning fruit trees visit: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/training-and-pruning-fruit-trees-in-north-carolina> or contact Kaitlyn Lamaster at kmlamast@ncsu.edu or 910-576-6011

The Montgomery County Beekeepers

The Montgomery County Beekeepers met in February to learn about volunteering opportunities at the North Carolina Zoo Honey Bee Exhibit. Montgomery County Beekeepers had a role in the development of the Honey Bee Exhibit in 2009. It is now a permanent Zoo Exhibit. Members of the state beekeepers association are eligible to volunteer at the exhibit to educate the public about beekeeping and the honey bee. They can also market their local honey while there. To learn more about the Honey Bee Exhibit visit the Zoo website.



Montgomery County Cattlemen's Association



The Montgomery County Cattlemen meeting will be **Tuesday, March 8th at 6:30PM** at the Agricultural Center on Glen Rd. Guest speaker Johnny Rogers, NCSU Amazing Grazing Program Coordinator will speak on "Managing Grazing Systems with Higher Input Costs." For more information about Montgomery County Cattlemen's Association, contact Tracy Blake, 910-576-6011 or tracy_blake@ncsu.edu

2022 State of Agriculture Address



During the Southern Farm Show, February 3, 2022, Agriculture Commissioner, Steve Troxler, delivered his annual State of Agriculture address at the 16th Annual Ag Development Forum. It was a look back at 2021 and a look ahead for agriculture as he took a deep dive into the challenges and victories for farmers in 2021. The address also included a discussion about North Carolina's changing population and demographics as it pertains to rural areas, and the need for broadband access. Other speakers included Harry Vroomen, Vice President of Economic Services, The Fertilizer Institute and Dr. Blake Brown, Professor, Agriculture and Resource Economics, North Carolina State University. You can listen to the address in its entirety at <https://sfntoday.com/nc-commissioner-troxler-state-of-agriculture-address/>

Know the warning signs of avian influenza

Call your veterinarian or the Office of the State Veterinarian if you notice any of these signs.

- ▶ Lack of energy and poor appetite
- ▶ Drop in egg production or soft- or thin-shelled misshapen eggs
- ▶ Swelling around the eyes, neck and head
- ▶ Purple discoloration of the wattles, combs and legs
- ▶ Stumbling, falling down, diarrhea
- ▶ Sudden increase in bird deaths in your flock

www.ncagr.gov/avianflu

Montgomery County VAD Protects Farms & Forests for Future Generations. North Carolina is 2nd in the nation for loss of farmland to commercial or residential use. Montgomery County is one of 90 counties in North Carolina that has formed a



Voluntary Agricultural District. Land in the VAD program is publicly recognized under county ordinance. Enrolled farmers have access to an agricultural advisory board for support in the occurrence of nuisance complaints or other county agricultural issues. Currently, 11,638 farms are enrolled in the program statewide, protecting 819,629 acres of farms and forests. In 2020, Montgomery County had 12 farms enrolled for a total of 1,868 acres. Land included in the program is protected for 10 years and must remain in crop, livestock, or forestry production to remain eligible. The agricultural advisory board will be meeting in the coming months and hopes to recruit more farmers and forest land owners into the VAD. For more information, Contact Tracy Blake at Cooperative Extension; tracy_blake@ncsu.edu or 910-576-6011. You can also visit the [VAD Website](#).

An update on High Path Avian Influenza

NC Poultry owners should still be following strict biosecurity measures. As of February, 25, 2022, cases have been confirmed in 139 wild waterfowl in Craven, Currituck, Hyde, Pamlico, Beaufort and Bladen counties. Two commercial farms in Kentucky, five commercial farms in Indiana, one commercial farm in Delaware and backyard flocks in Virginia, New York, Michigan, and Maine have also confirmed cases of HPAI. "Although the number of cases of HPAI in wild waterfowl is unchanged in North Carolina this week it is not an indication that HPAI is no longer a serious threat," said State Veterinarian Mike Martin. For More information visit [NCAGR](#).



The 70th Annual North Carolina Cattlemen's Conference was held February 25 – 26, 2022 at the Hickory Metro Convention Center in Hickory, NC. This was the first in-person meeting of the NC Cattlemen since 2019.

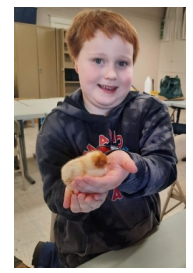
Outgoing president, Karl Gillespie: "2021 has been an extremely challenging year for everyone, especially for those of us in the cattle business. In addition to droughty conditions in some areas and flooding in others, COVID continues to cause uncertainty in our markets. Even with all these challenges, we are continuing to see strong demand for our beef products. It is imperative that we continue to add value to our products as we continue to feel the pressures of other protein-based products. Agriculture continues to provide the largest economic impact in North Carolina, with approximately 8,400,000 acres in operation and 800,000 cattle on the farm. Agriculture as a whole, accounts for \$96B, of which our industry has a \$550M economic impact in North Carolina. Over 85% of North Carolina farms are family owned, and they continue to thrive despite all of our challenges."



For more information, visit [NC Cattlemen](#).

Chick Distribution Day

Our 4-H Chicken Project Showmen, Brady King & Madilyn Bowles, will raise their chicks into laying hens to show at the 4-H Regional Chicken Show in May. The two breeds are Cinnamon Queens, who will lay brown eggs, and Easter Eggers, who will lay blue and green eggs. Getting inspired to raise your own flock? Chicks will be available soon at Montgomery Farm & Garden in Troy and Tractor Supply in Biscoe.



Links of Interest:

The Visit NC Farms App (Download Today!): <https://www.visitncfarmstoday.com/>

Livestock Newsletter:

<https://montgomery.ces.ncsu.edu/livestock-newsletter/>

NC Horse Blog: <http://nchorse.blogspot.com/>

Farms Food & You Podcast (New Emerging Crop: Cigar Wrapper Tobacco): <https://cals.ncsu.edu/farms-food-and-you/>



Poultry Processing Field Day, Saturday, April 2 from 9am-2pm at Stokes County Cooperative Extension. Topics will include management of backyard flocks for meat production, the exemption and inspection process to sell meat, basic poultry anatomy, and the

opportunity to gain hands on experience using the mobile processing unit. Registration includes lunch and one processed whole chicken to take home. Participants will need to bring a cooler for transporting the processed chicken. Cost is \$25, Register @ [Eventbrite](#)

Better Business Practices for Farmers & Growers



In this two day workshop, producers will learn modern strategies for marketing their products and learn about community partners which can help solidify and grow their business.

Thursday, March 17th, 9am-Noon
**Facebook is for Farmers:
Social Media and Marketing Day**



Thursday March 24th, 9am-Noon
**Let's Get Down to Business:
Grants, Farm Status, Tax Exemption, & more**



Attend in Person at Montgomery County Center
or Virtually Via Zoom

To register, call
910-576-6011 or visit:
<https://forms.gle/CWpYyFfwXBm1bRHD8>



Family & Consumer Sciences Updates
Rhonda Peters, FCS Agent
Elizabeth Thompson, Nutrition Educator



**Elizabeth's Nutrition
Nuggets**

March is National Nutrition Month, and it's a great time to make healthful changes to your eating and exercise plans. Eating a variety of foods is a great way to get the nutrients you need and make sure you get to eat the flavors you enjoy. As a general rule, you should fill your plate with half fruits and veggies, one-fourth lean protein and one-fourth whole grains. We have been learning this in the Go, Glow, Grow curriculum at Troy, Star, and Green Ridge Elementary for the past 4 weeks. I have really enjoyed working with Troy and Green Ridge Pre-K students! Rhonda and I are wrapping things up at all three schools next week. Rhonda and I will be doing this program at Mount Gilead and Candor Elementary starting March 21st. We are super excited about being able to work with these Pre-K students as well!

A flavorful spring recipe that you and your family will savor. Use your favorite spring vegetables from your garden or local farmers market: sugar snap peas, carrots, and asparagus are all delicious options.

Pasta Primavera

Ingredients

- 1 cup noodles, uncooked
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 cups mixed vegetables (chopped)
- 1 cup tomatoes (chopped)
- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 3 tablespoons Parmesan cheese

Directions

1. Cook noodles according to package directions.
2. While noodles are cooking, heat oil in a skillet.
3. Add vegetables and saute until tender; stir constantly.
4. Add tomato and saute 2 more minutes.
5. Toss vegetables with noodles and margarine.



4-H Happenings in Montgomery County
Chrissy Haynes, 4-H Youth Development

Montgomery County 4-H teens, along with teens from all across the South Central District attended Teen Retreat March 5th – 6th at Millstone 4-H Camp. The district officers did an outstanding job planning a fun-filled and educational weekend that everyone enjoyed. We also completed a community service project while at camp. Youth made over 200 dog toys for the Anson County Humane Society while at Teen Retreat.



One of our local 4-H Clubs, recently held a dog and cat supply drive for Project Pawz and our local Montgomery County Humane Society. 4-H'ers use their "Hands to Larger Service" in our communities everyday!



Our Youth Leadership Montgomery Class of 2021 - 2022 completed a Tour of Undiscovered Places Day on February 14th, attended the County Commissioners meeting on February



Staff Directory

15th and the School Board meeting on March 7th. We have 15 students in this year's class of Youth Leadership. On March 10th we will complete Agricultural Day in Montgomery County and will tour lots of local farms throughout the day. On March 11th, students in the program will complete a day of community service and will package food that will stay in our county and given out at local food pantries. Youth Leadership Montgomery students will be completing their Shadow a Leader Day in April to learn more about a possible career choice and gain first-hand experience shadowing someone in their career interest. Students will also visit the NC Legislature in May to learn more about state government and will meet with elected officials before graduation in May.

For more information regarding Montgomery County 4-H Programs or to register your child (ages 5 – 18) in 4-H, please contact Chrissy Haynes, 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent at (910) 576-6011.



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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



Check out our current videos by visiting

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOIPmzMobAJoawefJK_ldzA

