

January, 2024

From the Director's Desk

Happy New Year! Our Staff are excited about the New Year and about serving the citizens of Montgomery County in the areas of **Agriculture (Livestock and Field Crops and Horticulture/Forestry), 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 have a new Extension Agent joining our team this month, Ms. Emily Briggs will be our new Livestock and Field Crops Agent who begins on January 10th, 2024. More information will be shared about Emily in our next edition.



I was honored to receive Troy Rotary Club's Vocational Service Award at their meeting held on January 4th. During their meeting, I was able to share information about many of our Cooperative Extension programs in the county.

Montgomery County Tree of Hope Christmas Assistance Program is co-sponsored by NC Cooperative Extension and Montgomery County 4-H along with Montgomery County

Schools, Communities in Schools and the Montgomery County Partnership for Children. This year, children from 192 total families (over 300 children) from Montgomery County were identified to benefit from the program and distribution of gifts occurred on December 13th. See a few photos below from this year's program. We would like to extend a huge **THANK YOU** to everyone who donated money or gifts this Holiday season to the cause. Because of you, we can make a difference in our county one child at a time.



GIVE A CHILD HOPE THIS CHRISTMAS!

Do you remember that exciting feeling of cautious anticipation as a child, when you went to bed on Christmas Eve... hoping that you would wake up and find that special gift you had been dreaming about all year?



The holidays are upon us... and for many families in Montgomery County, NC what should be a season of joy and celebration, can often be a time filled with hardship, uncertainty, and very little hope.

YOU can make difference in the lives of so many of our county's less fortunate children - by giving them the most important gift of all... the GIFT of HOPE!

- CHOOSE a card.
- Purchase GIFTS using the info (age, sizes, needs, wishes, & likes) listed for that child.
- Drop off the UNWRAPPED gifts following the date & location instructions on the card.
- Our awesome volunteer ELVES will do the rest!

WITH YOUR HELP, the Tree of Hope will be able to fulfill a wide variety of needs and wishes for nearly 450 children, newborn through fifth grade, in Mont. Co this year!



For more information regarding any of our Cooperative Extension Programs in Montgomery County, please contact our office at 910-576-6011 or visit our website at montgomery.ces.ncsu.edu





Miranda Thompson, 4-H Youth Development

Regional Chicken Project

The Regional Chicken Project is an opportunity for youth in 4-H and FFA to learn more about the livestock industry. Throughout this project, youth will get to choose laying hen and/or broiler chicks to raise. The birds will be raised and youth will complete a project record book to chronicle their care and knowledge learned about chickens. Youth will also compete in a chicken show where they will demonstrate to the judge their knowledge of their birds. Training will be provided through Zoom and in person workshops. At the end of the project youth who raised broilers will donate them to be processed and given to a local food bank. Laying hens can be kept to lay eggs for potential egg business and future shows and projects. Six youth from Montgomery County 4-H will be participating in this project this year!

2024 Regional Chicken Project

REGISTER TODAY!

IMPORTANT DATES

- REGISTRATION DEADLINES
 - LAYING HEN CHICKS - JAN 5, 2024
 - BROILER CHICKS - FEB 9, 2024
- ORIENTATION ZOOM - FEB 15, 2024
- LAYING HEN CHICK DELIVERY - FEB 2024
- BROILER CHICK DELIVERY - MARCH 2024
- SHOW - APRIL 30, 2024

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL YOUR LOCAL EXTENSION OFFICE

Bladen: Becky Speermon, 910-562-4391
 Blount: Tom Newby, 910-562-4591
 Brunswick: Jamie Lester, 910-255-3210
 Columbus: Rebekah Benton, 910-440-6405
 Cumberland: Liz Joseph, 910-521-6860
 Cumberland: Jessica Drake, 910-521-6860
 Halifax: Liz Joseph, 910-875-5461
 Montgomery: Miranda Thompson, 910-576-6011
 New Hanover: Elizabeth Stratton, 910-798-7660
 Robeson: Taylor Davis, 910-671-5276
 Sampson: Elizabeth Merrill, 910-592-7161

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Montgomery County 4-H Livestock Club



In the month of December our Montgomery County 4-H Livestock Club took part in the Star Christmas Parade and celebrated the Christmas season by giving back to the community. Youth had the opportunity to come together on December 18th to pack

bags for veterans in Montgomery County alongside Gracia Pack from Veterans Services. These

bags will be available for any veteran and their families that visit Ms. Pack's office here in Montgomery County.

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

Three Schools Graduate Go, Glow, Grow Program



The Nutrition Educator and Family and Consumer Sciences Agent completed the Go, Glow, Grow program at three schools in November and December. Two Pre-K classes at Troy Elementary School and two more at Star Elementary successfully completed the curriculum, learning all about how to make our bodies healthy and strong. In addition to education provided in the classroom, bilingual parent newsletters were sent home with every session to encourage nutrition and physical activity at home. As in previous years, teachers were very responsive to the program, and welcomed our staff into their classrooms. Teachers reported that students looked forward to the lessons, that the lessons fully met the early childhood education goals, and that they noticed children trying more healthy foods in the cafeteria.

In 2024, we plan to continue implementing the Go, Glow, Grow Program until we reach every Pre-K student in Montgomery County, in public and private settings. Additionally in 2024, we hope to launch the Organ Wise program with elementary school students.





Elizabeth's Healthy Recipe Corner



Cream of Broccoli Soup

This creamy soup makes a perfect lunch or dinner. Keep it healthy using fat-free milk and fresh or frozen broccoli.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups chicken broth, low-sodium
- 1/2 cup onion (chopped)
- 2 cups broccoli (cut)
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme (dried, crushed)
- 2 bay leaves (small)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Pepper (dash, optional)
- 1 cup non-fat milk
- Garlic powder (dash, optional)

Directions

- Wash hands with soap and water.
- In a saucepan combine chicken broth, chopped onion, broccoli, thyme, bay leaf and garlic powder. Bring mixture to boiling. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 10 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Remove bay leaf.
- Place half of the mixture in a blender or food processor, cover and blend 30 to 60 seconds or until smooth. Pour into a bowl; repeat with remaining vegetable mixture, set all aside.
- In the same saucepan warm the oil. Stir in flour, salt, and pepper. Add the milk all at once, stirring rapidly with a wire whisk. Cook and stir until mixture is thickened and bubbly. Stir in the blended broccoli mixture. Cook and stir until soup is heated through. Season to taste with additional salt and pepper.

Agricultural Updates Owen Washam, Horticulture & Forestry

Flora Fridays:

Flora Friday articles are uploaded regularly to our website. Check often for articles on plants and trees of interest in Montgomery County. In the most recent edition, evergreen ferns were discussed for their benefits. They provide winter color, wildlife shelter, and can provide garden texture. Read more by clicking here: [Flora Fridays](#)



NC STATE EXTENSION

Master Gardener | Montgomery County

The Extension Master Gardener Volunteers (EMGVs) of Montgomery County met on December 4, 2023. The group celebrated the holidays, their 2023 accomplishments, and elected 2024 officers. The EMGVs will meet next on January 8th for the new year, kicking off planning for the plant sale and voting on revised bylaws.

A cohort of 9 students will begin their EMGV Initial Training on January 8th. These students will obtain educational and field experience weekly from January to May through N.C. Cooperative Extension Montgomery County. After Training and passing the final exam, students will continue on their path to EMGV Certification by working as Interns with current Certified members. We are excited for Initial

Agricultural Updates - Livestock/Field Crops**Montgomery County Cattlemen Association**

The Montgomery County Cattlemen will meet on Tuesday, January 9th at 6:30 PM at the Ag Center located at 200 Glen Rd. Troy, NC. Anyone interested in becoming part of the Montgomery County Cattlemen's, contact Chrissy Haynes, CED at 910-576-6011.

Hay/Forage/Soil Testing

Need your hay or forage tested for nutritional value? Soil testing? Soil Samples are FREE through Thanksgiving. Cooperative Extension & NCDA partner to offer this service. Test now, to save time and money later! Call 910-576-6011.

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

The Montgomery County Beekeepers will meet January 18th. Guest speaker will be Nic Halchin of Halchin Hives. He will be speaking on, "Beekeeping With Halchin Hives- Winter and Early Spring Management with Tips and Tricks for Success." For more Information about beekeeping, Please call Chrissy Haynes, CED at 910-576-6011.

Links of Interest:

- ◆ The Visit NC Farms App (Download Today!)
<https://www.visitncfarmstoday.com>
- ◆ Meatsuite a direct-to-consumer meat app!
[https:// www.meatsuite.com/](https://www.meatsuite.com/)

Training, and are developing engaging and fun ways to meet education goals. If you would like to join the list of community members interested in future Initial Trainings and Certification, please contact Owen Washam at owen_washam@ncsu.edu or (910) 576-6011.

Winter Wildflower Workshop:

On Saturday, January 20, 2024, the Montgomery County Center will be leading a winter wildflower workshop. Come learn about winter seed sowing, and receive native species specially selected for pollinator benefits and season long color. The cost is \$10 for two kits, cash or check at the door. Registration is limited, sign up today before supplies run out!

Register here by January 17th: RSVP Google Form

<https://forms.gle/6RGpZkUGXPRtwTKa9>

Southern Farm Show

The Southern Farm show is back! This year's event will take place from January 31 - February 2, 2024 at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh. Owen Washam is planning a van trip on Wednesday January 31st for those wanting to attend. The cost will be \$15 per rider with limited spaces available. Attendees will have the opportunity to gain 4 Continuing Education Credits for pesticide licensing, learn about farm electricity safety, attend farming finance talks by the USDA, and view the vendor show. More details and sign up is posted to our website, go.ncsu.edu/readext?977955, keep checking back for details!

Needs Assessment:

Owen Washam, Horticulture and Forestry Extension Agent, is enthusiastic about delivering quality programs to Montgomery County residents. He requests your response to the survey below to learn more about your needs and interests in his subject area:

<https://forms.gle/cNsuiR8HTb7kJZSa7>



To find out more about FCS programs in Montgomery County, visit www.montgomery.ces.ncsu.edu or visit us on Facebook. If you would like to discuss bringing programs to your community, please call Rhonda Peters or Elizabeth Thompson at (910) 576-6011 or email rtpeters@ncat.edu or eathompson@ncat.edu

Be on the lookout for more information and opportunities for your youth from Montgomery County 4-H or contact our agent, Miranda Thompson at miranda_thompson@ncsu.edu.

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/>.



Check out our current videos by visiting

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



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

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