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"Partnering with communities to deliver education and technology."

CELEBRATING AGRICULTURE . . .
AT COVE CREEK FARM HERITAGE DAY AND THE 56TH ANNUAL FARM-CITY BANQUET

During the last weekend of summer at the old Cove Creek school, turkeys strutted, apple butter was cooked down, corn was milled, tutors were sold, and hit-n-miss engines sputtered at Farm Heritage Day. Despite morning rain, the sky blue’d up around lunchtime and visitors from around the county got to visit an old-timey country fair -- Cove Creek Farm Heritage Day. This was the first year that the entire staff of Cooperative Extension played a role in the event. Information and demonstration booths were set up to showcase the people and programs that Extension is involved with. Karee Mackey, 4-H Agent, and her volunteers had a fruit and vegetable painting station set up for kids to create masterpieces of “Ag-Art”. Master Gardeners Carol Hancock, Joan Brannon, and Doris Ratlord were on hand to answer plant clinic questions. and Richard Boylan organized an on-site seed swap for folks wishing to diversify their landscaping and gardens. Sonya Garland from the Watauga County Christmas Tree Association brought a freshly-cut Fraser fir and greenery, and I made wreaths (a little early, granted, but lots of folks were interested in seeing how they were made). Margie Mansure set up a food preservation display. Extension worked with Amy Shelton and the Farm Heritage Day organizing committee to offer contacts and exhibitors to help bring even more “farm” to this annual Farm Heritage event. Ian Snider’s draft horses for logging, the Norris family’s “Goat Green” goats, and Colleen Moe’s turkeys were big hits with the kids. The newly-formed High Country Wine Growers Association shared information about area vineyards and brought bunches of wine grapes being cultivated in the High Country. Celebration of the county’s farm heritage will cap off on November 3rd as Extension hosts the 56th annual Farm-City Banquet. The theme for the 2011 Farm-City Banquet is “High Country Grown” as we are celebrating our High Country grown produce, programs, and people. Following a local food supper catered by Bandana’s, we will recognize individuals for their achievements, contributions and support of our local agricultural economy. We will also have door prizes that will be given out at the end of the celebration. An artist from the Watauga County Arts Council will finish a piece of “Ag-Art” that will also be given away as a door prize. The Blue Ribbon Boys will be pickin’ and grinnin’ during the meal, and the Farm Family of the Year will be awarded as well as others. Our thanks go to the many sponsors that support CELEBRATING AGRICULTURE . . .
AT COVE CREEK FARM HERITAGE DAY AND THE 56TH ANNUAL FARM-CITY BANQUET

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Watauga River Clean Up Results

Dumpsters are full, sneakers are wet, smiles are wide, and the Watauga River is a whole lot cleaner! Thanks to the 114 volunteers who cleaned up 3,740 pounds of trash on Saturday, September 10, 2011! 2010 results were 126 volunteers with 1,940 pounds.

This year’s river clean up could not have happened without the River Captains. These are the people who shuttle, transport trash to the dumpsters, and provide leadership for the volunteers who show up to their site. This year’s River Captains who led volunteer efforts in the Watauga Watershed include: Barbara Michel of ASU! Walker School of Business; Donna Lisenby and Erin Savage of Appalachian Voices Riverkeeper, Dick Hearn, Joan Hearn, and Teresa Buckwalter from the Watauga River Partners; Tim Small and Andi Cochran of Appalachian Geographical Society; Jaimie McGirt and Andy Hill. Foscoe Fishing Company, Appalachian Angler, Watauga River Angler, and River and Earth Adventures are always ready to help out in any way that they can, and I surely appreciate their help this year. Thank you all so much!!!

GDS disposal service was a tremendous help, providing open-top dumpsters across the watershed for volunteers to utilize! Thank you so much GDS for helping to keep our rivers clean!!! Watauga County Sanitation and Watauga County Maintenance also provided resources to ensure a safe and effective clean up. Dee Dunden also helped tremendously with glove organization.

Some of the peculiar items volunteers found include: a laundry basket, jock strap, boot, iron sink, microwave, engine block, plastic sled, buried gas tank, desk, bed springs and chairs. The most common items found were beverage bottles and cans; approximately 900 lbs. got recycled but a lot didn’t. So much stuff in the river, I would never go barefoot!!


This event and our local ag economy, especially Watauga County Farm Bureau, our “Gold” sponsor. Our other sponsors are a snapshot of the commodity associations, private businesses, and agencies that form a long list of those who support agriculture one farm at a time:

Hollar and Greene Produce, Carolina Farm Credit, Southern AG, PHARMN, the Watauga County Farmers’ Market, the Watauga County Christmas Tree Association, Mountain Kubota of Boone, Allen Wealth Management, Critcher Brothers Produce, the Watauga Cattlemen’s Association, Watauga County Soil and Water, Goodnight Brothers Hams, Mountain Keepers, the Watauga Beekeepers Association, and Bandana’s.

Kids in the Creek

Since 2001, Wendy Patoprsty with the Watauga County Cooperative Extension and Dick and Joan Hearn of the Watauga River Partners have been playing in the creek water with Watauga County 4th graders. Kids in the Creek is a program that was developed to create water quality awareness in the High Country’s youth. The program delivers participatory education on water testing, watersheds, non-point source pollution, and of course live creek “critter” identification. Patoprsty and the Harems recently visited the 4th graders of Valle Crucis Elementary School and helped them find stoneflies, mayflies, crayfish, and salmonanders in the Watauga River.
Take the 40-gallon Challenge

Drought conditions, population growth and increasing water demands has put added stress on the water supply all over the country. Whether you live in the city or out in the county, whether you have a private well, spring, shared system or city supply, our water resources are extremely valuable. Because the High Country is located at the headwaters of our rivers, we are dependent upon our groundwater resources to fill our wells, springs and rivers. There have been studies on the quantities of water stored in our aquifers, but there are no real answers as to how much is available to us and how quickly our aquifers will recharge via rain fall. It could take a day to thousands of years for aquifer recharge, depending on the soil and rock permeability.

The 40-Gallon Challenge is a call for residents and businesses to reduce our region’s water use on average by 40 gallons per person, per day. The challenge began this year as a voluntary campaign to increase water conservation.

The 40-Gallon Challenge encourages people to save a minimum of 40 gallons a day by adopting new water-saving techniques. The pledge card outlines water-saving practices and the daily water-savings to expect. You can use the pledge to review the water-saving practices that you or your family currently puts to use. By pledging new practices, you will see the total daily savings expected for your household. The 40-Gallon Challenge also provides maps and charts to see pledge activities in your county and across the United States.

Reducing water usage at home not only saves this precious resource, it also helps homeowners keep more money in their wallets. Saving a minimum of 40 gallons a day for 30 days adds up to more than 1,000 gallons per month. This is an easy way to document the amount of water saved since most water providers bill in thousand-gallon increments. In other words, you should see real savings on your water bill if you follow through with your pledge and put to use the recommended water-saving practices.

Visit this website for more information: www.40gallonchallenge.org/

Article produced by the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences © 2011

Bird and Butterfly Gardens

The Watauga County Extension Master Gardeners have partnered with the High Country Audubon Society to develop a Bird and Butterfly Garden at the Daniel Boone Native Gardens in Boone. Master Gardener Volunteers selected native plants that are important food sources to birds and butterflies in the region. With the conversion of natural habitats to developed areas, native species not only lose areas to live but also important food sources. Gardeners can help ease this threat by establishing native plants in the landscape, providing both beauty and purpose.

Many late-blooming perennial plants have persistent seed heads that help feed hungry birds through the fall and winter. Joe Pye Weed (Eupatorium), Appalachian Ironweed (Vernonia), and New England Asters (Symphyotrichum) are all attractive native plants that provide seeds for birds. Rather than removing the spent flowerheads in the fall, gardeners can leave them in the garden to provide winter interest in the landscape and feed hungry birds.

Butterflies rely on native plants as a food source for both the caterpillar and adult stages. Milkweeds are well-known host plants that caterpillars devour, and there are many other herbaceous plants, shrubs and trees that also serve this purpose. Caterpillars feed on host plants in order to reach full maturity as adult butterflies, so it is essential that gardeners tolerate leaves and stems being eaten by the hungry larvae.

Adult butterflies need plant nectar for a food source. There are many plants, both native and exotic, that provide nectar for pollinators. In the native garden, Blazing Star (Liatris), Milkweeds (Asclepias species), and Carolina Phlox (Phlox carolina) are all ornamental and functional butterfly nectar plants.

All gardeners can bring more native plants in the landscape to help feed and support birds and butterflies. More information and plant lists for establishing bird and butterfly gardens can be found at: www.nccs.edu/goingnative/aplnat02a.pdf and www.nccs.edu/depts/hort/consumerr.../birds/bird_index.htm.

For more information on the Daniel Boone Native Gardens, please visit: www.danielboonegardens.org/
M ost rain that falls on hard surfaces like roofs, driveways, roads, and parking lots flows directly into our creeks and rivers. These high flows carry pollutants, cause flooding, erode streambanks and disturb habitat. In contrast, rainfall on natural surfaces like forests and meadows soaks into the ground, replenishing groundwater and streams. Rainscapes are landscape enhancements that reduce stormwater runoff from properties. Rainscapes simulate natural drainage to intercept, capture and absorb rain into the ground.

Rainscapes help to reduce: stormwater runoff from properties, drainage problems, pollution entering streams, water use during dry spells, water bills, mowing, fertilizer and pesticide use. Rainscapes can enhance aesthetics, bird and other wildlife habitat, and property values. As homeowners and property managers become more aware of the issues of stormwater management, many of them are choosing to manage the runoff from their homes and businesses with rainscapes.

Classes For Farmers:

Have you heard about expanding sales opportunities for Organic growers? Perhaps you feel that your farm is too small to break into the conventional commercial vegetable market? Do you have some land that has been idle for a few years and now are looking to put it into potentially profitable production? Do you want to grow more sustainably? Answering yes to any of these questions may mean that the upcoming class on Organic Production is right for you. Whether you eventually choose to become a Certified Organic producer or not, the class will be filled with tips on how to successfully grow vegetable, small-fruited and field crops while building your soil's health and decreasing the use of synthetic chemicals on your farm.

This class is geared toward growers who are already set up for commercial-scale, certified organic production of vegetable and fruit crops and want to increase their sales. Participating growers will receive additional information on organic pest control, plus resource CD's for disconnecting the downspout will vary depending on where you want to direct the water. If the runoff from your roof flows directly onto pavement, consider using downspout extenders to direct the water to a grassed, wooded, or landscaped area. Runoff collected in a rain barrel or cistern can reduce your water bill. Dispersing from a downspout may involve cutting the downspout and attaching elbows, extensions, and splashblocks to direct the water flow away from the house or into a rainbarrel. There is very little maintenance involved afterwards.

Examples of Rainscapes:

Rain gardens – shallow depressions and serve as landscape features that can effectively collect and treat stormwater and reduce localized flooding. Rain gardens can be integrated into the existing landscape as a retrofit or be included in the initial landscaping plan.

Dispersing water from downspouts – A downspout is a vertical pipe used to drain rainwater away from buildings to protect foundations. They are usually directed onto a driveway or into a pipe or ditch that flows to a creek. Disconnecting the downspout flow from this system keeps rainfall on-site to spread over grass, landscaping, or into a wooded area. How to install? The procedure for disconnecting the downspout will vary depending on where you want to direct the water. If the runoff from your roof flows directly onto pavement, consider using downspout extenders to direct the water to a grassed, wooded, or landscaped area. Runoff collected in a rain barrel or cistern can reduce your water bill. Dispersing from a downspout may involve cutting the downspout and attaching elbows, extensions, and splashblocks to direct the water flow away from the house or into a rainbarrel. There is very little maintenance involved afterwards.

Rainbarrels and Cisterns – A rainwater harvesting system, including small rainbarrels and larger cisterns, captures stormwater runoff from a roof and stores the water for later use. A rainwater harvesting system can be used to wash cars, outdoor furniture, or water gardens — even when water restrictions prevents the use of municipal water for these purposes. The chlorine-free rainwater also contains nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus that can help plants grow when it is used for irrigation. By using rainwater for purposes that don’t require treated drinking water, we reduce the demand on municipal water supplies and increase the sustainability of drinking water supplies.

Conservation Planting – Conservation plantings use native and/or drought-tolerant plants that are adapted to local rainfall and soil conditions to replace part of your traditional lawn. When established, conservation plantings need much less maintenance than a lawn, though weeding and mulching will help keep it looking attractive.

Tree Planting – By controlling erosion, reducing runoff through infiltration, and trapping sediment and toxins, trees help communities to save money. Trees lower temperatures through shade and evapotranspiration, which reduces energy needs and costs. Trees raise the value of homes and attract businesses and tourism. Urban trees reduce the “heat island effect,” cooling our cities by as much as nine degrees. Trees remove harmful gases that contribute to acid rain, and the greenhouse effect.

FALL IS GARLIC-PLANTING TIME

Adapted by Richard Boylan for Western North Carolina conditions from articles by Tony Bratsch, Dept. of Horticulture, Virginia Tech, and Eldon Everhart, NC Cooperative Extension, Cindy Haynes, and Richard Jauroon, Iowa State University

Garlic is an important crop for many market growers in the southern Appalachians. For direct marketers, garlic can be an important sales item to complement other early summer crop offerings. Though it requires advance site preparation and planning, garlic is generally an easy crop to grow and one which lends itself well to organic production.

Like many monocot flower bulbs, garlic is a perennial bulb and performs best when fall-planted. It begins to root shortly after planting, makes top growth the following spring, and eventually begins to senesce. Garlic is harvested by early to mid-summer. Garlic can be spring planted, but a chilling requirement must be met for the cloves to properly grow, and plants need to reach an adequate size before day length increases, which triggers bulb formation. To meet this requirement, spring-planted
Garlic

Continued From Page 4

gen/acre, with phosphorus and potassium levels amended (depending on soil tests) at a 1:2:3 total nutrient ratio to added nitrogen. Composted organic matter should be added when possible. Incorporate amendments well into the soil. Most small-scale garlic growers utilize raised beds, especially if soils are heavy or poorly drained. Misshapen bulbs may result when garlic is grown in heavy, clay soils. The optimum soil pH for garlic is between 6 and 7. Before planting, soils should be well tilled to provide a loose, aerated bed for bulb development.

Because garlic plants do not produce true seeds, garlic is grown by planting cloves. When planting, separate individual cloves from the main bulb, and plant them about 4-6" apart in the row. Plant cloves as soon as possible. Manage grazing or mowing and spacing of planting stock may be advance sorting of planting stock may be needed. Curing will take about 4-6 weeks. At that time, roots and tops can be removed. Store cured garlic in a cool, dry place. Garlic varieties generally taste the same at harvest time, but after curing and some storage time, individual varieties may become more flavorful.

Garlic can be broken down into two basic groups -- softneck and hardneck (top set) types. Most of the 250 million pounds grown annually in this country are softneck types. Softneck types are particularly delicious when brushed slightly blackened and tender. The third major area is to add an efficient winter-feeding program for your cow herd. One of the most inefficient ways to feed hay is to set out rolls without restricting access. Research shows losses from 25% to 50% by feeding hay this way. To reduce losses, you can use a hay ring (no bottom) that averages 21% losses; a cradle averages 15% losses. A closed bottom ring feeder has losses of 10-15% whereas a calving pad has the least losses in a closed bottom feeder with a cone. This feeder is one of the newest designs of feeders to be tested and only has average losses of 7.5%

One common feeding method is to unroll hay. This can be effective and should allow all cows to eat at once. Feeding efficiency can be increased by unrolling only what is needed for one day and restricting access with a temporary electric fence. If the ground is unrolling only what is needed for one day and restricting access with a temporary electric fence. If the ground

The first step is to take an inventory of cattle and identify feed needs for each class. Cows at the same stage of gestation, bulls, replacement heifers, and feeder cattle are groups that should be fed separately.

Postpartum, because so that cattle harvest more forage and graze more efficiently for more days of the year. Develop a grazing plan; this maximizes growth of paddocks and water locations. Plan to graze the fields farthest away from the winter-feeding area, and work your way in toward the winter-feeding paddocks. If your hay fields are fenced or close to other pastures, then manage them for fall grazing allowing your cows to harvest the forage. Practice strip grazing, which only gives the cows a limited grazing area. This can be moving the fence daily, weekly or monthly. The key is to restrict access and make the cows utilize the forage in a small area.

If you will be feeding hay, have it tested. Hay should be tested in like lots, same field, same mowing, etc. The NCDA does the forage testing, and it is $10 per sample. By conducting a forage test, you can develop a feeding program that will meet the needs of your cows.

If you need to stretch your hay supplies, there are three practices to help you. The first is your storage area, then your feeding method and finally adding an ionophore to the ration.

Good hay is often harvested and then stored improperly, causing losses and deterioration in quality. There have been numerous studies that show you. Store hay outside, uncovered on the ground, that losses of 25% are common and often exceeds 50%. If you cover hay and prevent soil contact, then you can reduce losses to only 10 to 15%. Hay storage losses can be further reduced by covering inside a barn or structure, but it still should be protected from ground contact. Savings of 10-15% from preventing losses in storage work out to be a savings of $25 to $70 per ton, depending on your costs.

Grow and how you feed your cows also affects your winter feed costs. It can be challenging in the High Country to feed cattle in the winter. One common feeding method is to unroll hay. This can be effective and should allow all cows to eat at once. Feeding efficiency can be increased by unrolling only what is needed for one day and restricting access with a temporary electric fence. If the ground is wet, then cows will often use the hay as bedding, wasting more of what is fed.

The third major area is to add an insulated feed storage or hay. Rumensin is the only labeled ionophore for reproducing beef cows. Rumensin is added to feed or can be purchased
**Spiders in the Home**

Though many humans often fear or dislike spiders, they are an incredibly beneficial species. Spiders are excellent predators, preying on other insects both in the outdoors and inside. As the fall season cools off, many homeowners see more insect activity. Why is that? According to Rod Crawford, who has written about spider myths for the University of Washington’s Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, spiders don’t come into the house in the fall to get out of cold outdoor temperatures. Often times what you are seeing are house spiders that live in the house year-round. Then they become active and we see them more commonly in the home, often “coincides with the mating season of the given spider species.” What you are seeing is sexually mature males wandering in search of mates.” They aren’t trying to come in and warmed themselves up.

Michael Waldvogel and Charles Apperson, Extension Specialists at NC State University, offer the following advice on spiders seen in the home. “Finding a large number of spiders indoors usually means that there is an ample supply of insects and other “spider food” in the area. Any real attempts to get rid of spiders should focus on removing these insects. The long-term solution includes non-chemical measures:

- Sanitation – reducing or eliminating conditions that attract insects, e.g., high moisture and ready access to food of some sort.
- Exclusion – find the entry points used by both insects and spiders and seal or close these areas.
- Sanitation – reducing or eliminating conditions that attract insects, e.g., high moisture and ready access to food of some sort.
- Exclusion – find the entry points used by both insects and spiders and seal or close these areas.
- Culling decisions. If you’re concerned that more spiders will show up (or that the current numbers are too high), you could resort to applying an insecticide along baseboards, in corners, and inside storage closets. Select spider dust or spray is labeled for use against spiders indoors. Always read the insecticide label for complete instructions on how and where to use the product.
- Exclusion – find the entry points used by both insects and spiders and seal or close these areas.
- Culling decisions.

**Springs Calving Herds**

- Pregnancy check cows and replacement heifers. Cull open cows and cows that are poor producers, old, or have chronic health problems.
- Give booster vaccinations to replacement heifers and weaned calves as needed.
- Analyze weaning weights; start an index for your herd to help make culling decisions.

**Fall Calving**

- Watch cows daily for calving problems, record birth dates, calving weights, and calving ease to include on cow records.
- Test bulls for breeding soundness.
- Purchase new bulls; match EPD’s to your herd needs.

**General Recommendations**

- Take soil tests on pasture and hay fields. Apply lime as needed. Fall applied lime will lower pH by spring and time to reseed.
- Conduct a pasture walk to determine the quality of the pasture and the amount and type of weeds present.
- Keep minerals available to cattle.
- Clean water tanks.
- Check winter feed equipment and make repairs.
- Keep an eye on cattle for signs of fall poisonings; avoid grazing wooded areas with acorns and/or buckeeyes.
- Inventory feed supplies and develop a feeding plan.

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**Winter-feeding**

Continued From Page 5

In the mineral. It works by altering the ruminal fermentation that increases the amount of energy available for digestion. Research has shown a return of $5 for every $1 invested. Rumensin has been shown to help add body condition to cows and help increase growth of younger stock.

The basics of becoming more profitable when feeding the cow herd for winter are reduce the number of days you feed, and allow the cows to harvest more forage. Conduct a forage analysis and group cows into feeding groups. Take an inventory of hay hay, and identify ways to avoid storage losses. Repair or replace hay feeders, and be sure to have enough space to eat at one time. Add an ionophore to the feed or minerals for the winter-feeding period.

Realistic savings of 25% to 50% of winter feeding costs can be obtained by preventing losses and increasing efficiency.

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**FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES**

**SIZE OF WAIST**

**OFTEN CORRELATES TO PLATE CIRCUMFERENCE**

W

ile visiting family in Texas this summer, I discovered some things are bigger there – such as the plates and bowls in Mom’s cupboard. The plates were at least a foot across with no rim.

We’ve all seen these bargain-priced plates available at big box stores. They’re quite colorful and popular. But honestly, big plates do encourage big portions – especially of that yummy, Texas smoked BBQ.

As a nutrition educator, I’m happy with the recent decision of the USDA to get rid of the My Pyramid which was supposed to teach the average American about making healthy food choices. The adoption of My Plate is a reminder of what each meal should consist of. For more on this web site www.choosemyplate.gov/ offers good advice for those wanting to improve the quality of their diet or hoping to drop a few pounds.

Included in the recommendations are to avoid oversized portions and cover half of your plate with fruits and vegetables. While stocking your cupboards with inexpensive, small plates will help with portion control, I recently ran across a plate designed to take the guesswork out. Dietitians created a line of plates called Precise Portion (www.preciseportions.com/). A stylized vine design divides dinner plates into sections, with half reserved for vegetables and fruits, a quarter for starch vegetables, and a quarter for proteins. Also, at ten inches in diameter, the plate is smaller than most dinner plates.

Dieters spend money and energy to lose weight by purchasing dieting books recommending a specific amount of carbohydrate, protein or fat, or even worse, total elimination of innocent foods, such as potatoes, carrots, or skim milk. They buy expensive supplements, protein powders, and meal replacements. With the price of groceries, just eating less will save you money.

While common sense meals aren’t as sexy as protein powders or supplements, they are easier to make a long-term commitment to. Following the general guideline of eating more fruits and veggies, whole grains and a moderate amount of lean protein, ensures you will perform at your peak and maintain a healthy weight. Well-prepared and seasoned food tastes great.

This pesto recipe is an example of how to use a green leafy to season with. I made a huge quantity of this recipe after harvesting my basil. My garlic was harvested in July and ready for the union. I scooped the pesto with an ice cream dipper onto cookie sheets and placed them in the freezer. Once frozen, the balls were then popped into a freezer bag and taken out to use as pizza sauce, in pasta dishes, sauces, vegetables, and on fish and chicken.

**Pesto**

1 cup fresh basil leaves or frozen stems
1-3 cloves garlic
1/3 cup pine nuts, walnuts or pecans
3-6 tablespoons Parmesan cheese
1/2 teaspoon salt

Finely chop ingredients in food processor.

1/3 – 1/2 cup olive oil
Add and process a little more until a thick paste is made.

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**AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT**

**PREPARE TO MARKET YOUR CALF CROP**

Fall was one of a farmer’s favorite times – harvesting the crops that we have invested our time, labor and money in. The calf crop should be no different. With the drought in the Southwest this past year, feeder cattle supplies are tight. To receive the most value from your calves, develop some strategies to market your calves.

Implement a good herd health program. This needs to be done on time and any required boosters given. Calves that are vaccinated according to Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) standards can be awarded with higher prices. Use a modified live vaccine, and work with your veterinarian on vaccination schedules. Calves that have been vaccinated and are of the same quality often bring $6 to $8 more. This is the easiest way to add value to your calf crop.

Group your calves for sale. Larger groups of like calves usually sell for more than smaller groups or singles. If you do not have large numbers, then you might want to sell at a graded sale. These sales offer buyers graded calves that can be grouped by like size, color, and quality grade.

There has not been much information on the extra value age group calves can be awarded with higher prices. Use a modified live vaccine, and work with your veterinarian on vaccination schedules. Calves that have been vaccinated and are of the same quality often bring more.

This requires a good record keeping system and can be a long process.

Talk to the representative who will be selling your cattle. These representatives can offer advice on market demands and when might be the best time to market. Check into less traditional marketing methods like video auctions, group sales, buying stations, or selling local feeder calves or beef. Add value to your calves through a herd health program, good records, and better genetics.
Modern Health Epidemics Solvable By Community Design
District Health Department Brings Community Leaders Together

Imagine living in a Boone where every road has been built with the intent of allowing walkers, bicyclists, motor vehicles, and the AppaCART equal access. You may walk or bicycle to work or school without fear of being run over. Children have “play dates” by simply meeting neighborhood friends next to a stream, on a sidewalk, or on a bike path. Healthy, affordable food is accessible to all.

Recently, community leaders had the privilege of spending time with Mark Fenton, a nationally recognized public health and “built environment” expert. Mark is passionate about changing the way we have communities to combat the twin epidemics of inactive lifestyles and poor nutrition in our country.

Our next generation may be the first in recent history to have shorter life-spans than ancestors, thanks to chronic diseases brought on by modern society-inflicted epidemics. Included are some cancers, high blood pressure, diabetes and diseases of the heart.

The only way to fix rising health care costs is to look at the root of the problem. Bottom line – it’s very difficult to eat our basic needs of physical movement and a healthy diet anywhere in the U.S. except in a few communities who have made strong efforts to address the local environment.

Even though we know how good physical activity is for us, less than 25% of adults get the 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week minimum that’s recommended for health benefits. The recommendation for children is one hour per day or more, which even fewer achieve. Mark contends that we need to entirely change the way our communities are developed to make a difference in childhood health and quality and length of life for the next generation.

Instead of building another ugly big box store that is only accessible by car, communities should think of ways to enrich central areas that are accessible by all means of transportation.

As a society, we should make it easy to get the recommended 30 minutes a day of movement without planning a stop at the gym. Simply walking or riding a bicycle as a form of transit could add up to 30 minutes and big health and societal benefits. Our entire community has to realize the importance of this idea. To begin with, our leaders have to make certain that walkers, bicyclists, AppaCART, and motor vehicles are treated as equals when roads are being planned or improved. Community leaders also need to be proponents of farmers’ markets by allowing them to utilize public land when available, provide a few or with minimal fees, to make fresh produce more affordable.

As citizens, we have to begin to support the efforts. When community meetings for Department of Transportation, county, or town improvement projects are happening, be there to voice your opinion about the importance of treating all modes of transport as equals.

Let community decision makers and planners know how important local farmers are to us and why they need inexpensive locations to sell healthy food.

BUDGET-FRIENDLY FOOD TIPS

It seems like every time I grocery shop, several items that I typically choose have gone up 50 cents or more from the previous week. And with recent floods and droughts, it is predicted that prices will continue to rise. Here are a few tips to help lower your food bill:

- Check out the bulk bins where you may find cereals, grains, nuts and dried fruit for a good price.
- Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables packed in water or 100% juice and no added sugar are often on sale. Frozen fruit is excellent in smoothies or Oprah.
- Use frozen concentrated juices instead of can juice. Mix up in an airpitcher.
- Cook dried beans in large batches and freeze for later use.

For more information, check out the following websites: www.rockfork-goods.com; www.thebargainstoregame.com and www.couponmom.com which tutors you on how to get the most out of coupons.

Centennial Book Available

Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Service: Stories From the Life of Watauga County Extension Center

This recently-published history book chronicles the work of Home Economics, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agents and the North Carolina Extension & Community Association past 100 years. Wilma Hammett compiled the book which reviews the time period – by decades and also highlights each of North Carolina’s 100 counties.

Hardback copies can be purchased at the Watauga Extension office for $30.

Regional Retreats

The NC 4-H Alumni & Friends Association and the 4-H Endowment, along with the West District 4-H Volunteer Leaders Association and Swannanoa 4-H Center, invite you to a couple of special events.

On Friday, October 21, adults are invited to purchase tickets for a special Saturday evening event at Burnsville Wine and... where we are a business venture of retired 4-H Agent Joyce Wight. Tickets are available in advance or will be available on event day. Proceeds will benefit the Alumni & Friends Association Scholarship Fund and the Swannanoa 4-H Endowment.

Then on Saturday, October 22, there will be a family fun day for all ages at Swannanoa 4-H Center. There will be games and activities for everyone – and it’s “priceless”!!! Lunch concessions will be available for purchase on site. This is an opportunity to meet the new facilities coordinator, Scott Sheppard, of Swannanoa, visit with 4-H friends, and see some of the great 4-H curriculum in action – science activities, games, archery.

Local Hospitals Bring Farm-fresh Produce To Employees

Great Model For Employers To Consider

Every week, eighty families living in Avery and Watauga Counties are literally enjoying the fruit of two local farmers’ labor, thanks to Leslie Roberts, Wellness Coordinator for the Appalachian Healthcare System. “I thought if I could launch a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) at our worksite, it would not only help our employees increase their vegetable consumption, it would also support our local farmers. You can’t get any easier than farm-fresh produce delivered to your worksite doorstep!”

With increasing health care costs directly related to poor nutrition and inactive lifestyles, many large employers hire people like Leslie to assist employees and their families with healthier living. Studies have shown that worksite wellness programs reduce benefit costs, boost morale, and lead to more productive employees. Eating more fruits and vegetables is the easiest way to improve eating habits.

The employees seem to love the convenience of having their personal box of food delivered every week. “I think the fruits and vegetables are wonderful. And just think how much time and $ is saved by having it delivered!” Another employee shared, “Personally, participating has forced me to eat items that I tend to walk by at the grocery store, which is a good thing. I like the idea of supporting a local farmer, and he’s saving me a trip to the grocery store! If I get something that I don’t like to eat, I share it with family and friends. Everyone outside our organization that I’ve told about the CSA thinks it’s a great idea. They like that ARHS is supporting a local farmer.”

This worksite CSA model benefited local growers Bill Moretz (Watauga County) and Wyatt Still Avery (Avery County) by paying them a price per “share” before the growing season began, when their money and supplies from the previous season were low. As Leslie shares, the best way to get employees to participate is by payroll deduction. “Another feature of the program that really helped our participation was allowing the employee to payroll deduct the cost of their CSA in bi-weekly increments. By spreading the cost over the entire course of the CSA, it made it more affordable for the participants.

The worksite CSA model could potentially expand the number of acres in production across our region. Everyone has to eat, so instead of sending money to China for garlic, for example, we need to find ways to easily distribute our local abundance. Supporting local food creates jobs and boosts our local economy.

Since growers plan and order seeds in the winter, between now and Christmas is the time to plan for your CSA to start up spring 2012. If you would like more information on how to get a worksite CSA started, please discuss this idea with your favorite growers at the farmers’ market or contact Margie Mansure at 264-3061. I will be happy to help match you with a grower. Another helpful resource is www.highcountrygrown.org.
Retreats

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They will have a meeting at 11:00 on site to talk about how the Alumni Association can help keep them connected to one another and to the 4-H program.

Also, the West District 4-H Volunteer Leaders’ Association members will meet at 1:00 that afternoon for their fall meeting.

EXPLORE 4-H

Five to nine year olds are exploring the wonderful world of 4-H and all the different topics available. They meet monthly on the second Monday at 6:00 p.m. The group has explored birds and birdhouses, Tickle Me plants, farm animals, pet safety, taste science and more.

For those who love animals, the 4-H livestock group will be meeting on the third Monday of each month.

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

15 “Fencing Options for Horse Operations,” 7-8:30 p.m., Ag. Conference Center
18 4-H Livestock Club Meeting, 6-7 p.m., Ag. Conference Center

DECEMBER

18 “Equine Deworming Programs,” 7-8:30 p.m., Ag. Conference Center
19 Explore 4-H Club Meeting

FEBRUARY

15 “Fencing Options for Horse Operations,” 7-8:30 p.m., Ag. Conference Center
18 4-H Livestock Club Meeting, 6-7 p.m., Ag. Conference Center

Calendars

NOVEMBER

1 4-H Camp 2012 registration begins
3 Farm-City Banquet, 6 p.m., Boone United Methodist Church
8 Cattlemen’s Meeting, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., Ag. Conference Center
14 Explore 4-H Club Meeting

JANUARY

17 “Foaling Management,” 7-8:30 p.m., Ag. Conference Center
27 4-H Camp 2012 Registration deadline

MARCH

13 “Ask the Professional Trainer, Question & Answer,” 7-8:30 p.m., Ag. Conference Center

To see an updated Calendar of Events, please visit our blog at wataugaces.blogspot.com.

TEEN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

November 4-5  Sertoma 4-H Educational Center
Sertoma is located above Winston-Salem, about 2:15 from Boone

Join other 4-H members from across the state, have a fun social time, work in leadership workshops, and participate in a service project. Registration Due Date: October 14. Cost: $95. This fee includes lodging and meals (Friday dinner and Saturday breakfast, lunch and bag dinner to go).

HORSE SHOW IS A SUCCESS

The Blue Ridge Equestrian Open Charity Horse Show hosted by 4-H was held September 24-25. The show was initiated by teens Jacqueline Walczak and Jazmyne Maxwell. Having participated in 4-H horse shows at local, district and state levels in the past, the two wanted the local 4-H horse show to be revived after a couple years of inactivity. Others in the community had expressed the need for us to have a local show as well.

The teens demonstrated excellent leadership skills, responsibility and organization in preparing the class list, creating rules and guidelines, promoting sponsors, and participating in planning sessions. Ashley Oliver volunteered to be the show manager. The event was held at the Blowing Rock Equestrian Preserve. Nearly 60 participants competed in the show, and nearly that many volunteers assisted. The ASU Equestrian team was on hand, as well as the Lee’s McRae Equestrian team, to lend their horse show experience to the management of the show. The event was a great success, and there were many requests to hold it again!

OUR MISSION:

“North Carolina Cooperative Extension partners with communities to deliver education and technology that enrich the lives, land and economy of North Carolinians.”

For more information, contact the Watauga County Center at 971 W. King Street, Boone, NC 28607, (828) 262-6341; or the Ashe County Extension Office at 137 N. Main Street, P.O. Box 517, West Jefferson, NC 28694, (828) 635-9275.