

Cooperative Extension Services

Organization: 310050

	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Current	2015/16 Requested	2015/16 Approved	Percent Change
Revenues					
State	\$3,100	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Local	0	1,662	0	0	0%
Miscellaneous	0	0	23,310	33,775	0%
General Fund	242,459	320,851	341,428	311,796	-2.8%
Total	\$242,459	\$322,513	\$364,738	\$345,571	7.1%
Expenses					
Personal Services	\$32,029	\$25,749	\$43,783	\$42,965	66.9%
Supplies & Operations	210,430	296,764	320,955	302,606	2.0%
Capital	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	\$242,459	\$322,513	\$364,738	\$345,571	7.1%
Employees					
Permanent	0.80	0.80	1.00	1.00	25.0%
Hourly	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0%
Total	0.80	0.80	1.00	1.00	25.0%

Budget Highlights

Cooperative Extension's budget increased by 7.15 percent (\$23,058) but this increase is attributable to an accounting change rather than a true increase in expenses. The budget now reflects Cooperative Extension's full programming expenses and revenue whereas, until this year, some of these expenses were accounted for through liability accounts that held fees and program revenues expected to be spent immediately in delivering those specific programs.

Since last year's budget was adopted, the State restructured Cooperative Extension and made decisions which resulted in the elimination of two local positions in the Catawba County Cooperative Extension office -- one administrative assistant and one Environmental and Natural Resources agent. These are full FTE reductions that the County and the State funded 50/50. In order to minimize the impacts of these position eliminations to the public, Catawba County has increased local funding for two existing positions in Cooperative Extension: the 4-H Program Assistant and Local Foods Agent.

Performance Measurement

Fiscal Year 2015/16

Cooperative Extension will continue to educate the community on agriculture and youth leadership. The department will educate new, beginning, or transitional farmers on current and alternative enterprises. 4-H will improve youth leadership, citizenship, and college readiness skills through offering Catawba County Youth Council and college –preparedness programs.

Fiscal Year 2014/15

At mid-year, Cooperative Extension Services (CES) was on target to achieve or has achieved its 17 outcomes for Fiscal Year 2014/15. CES is on target to educate new, beginning, or transitional farmers on current and alternative enterprises by hosting two field days throughout the fiscal year. In the autumn, a regional winter squash field day was held. The second field day, a high-tunnel strawberry demonstration, took place in April 2015. Fall Vegetable Gardening, Composting, Landscaping to Encourage Wildlife, and Pest Management to Protect Water Quality classes were held in the autumn with the goal of improving participants' landscaping skills to protect local natural resources. These classes reached 42 citizens with approximately 80 percent affirming intent to adopt at least one new skill.

For 4-H School Enrichment programs, CES also remained on target to accomplish its outcomes. The department, in partnership with Catawba County Schools, offered the County Science Fair. All 48 students who participated expanded their science knowledge and improved skills in conducting scientific research. Also, a total of 235 youth participated in the 4-H Club's special interest programs such as Mini-Society. Mini-Society is a multi-county youth summer program that focuses on entrepreneurship, with 43 youth participating.

Fiscal Year 2013/14

To promote and support the local agriculture economy, NC Cooperative Extension supported and promoted Catawba County fruit/vegetable production as outlined in the Farm & Food Sustainability Plan. Extension provided intensive education on vegetable and fruit production through the Foothills Farm School, Retail Ready workshop, and Strawberry Production workshop, reaching 80 local agriculture producers. All this was done amid the impacts of a severe flooding event that took place in late July, 2013.

Cooperative Extension, in partnership with Keep Catawba County Beautiful (KCCB), promoted a cleaner and more beautiful community. The partnership coordinated two public litter collection events, garnering 109 participants, an increase of over 50 percent. The partnership also expanded participation in the Adopt-a-Road/Street/Highway program by increasing the number of adopted roads to 84, better than the targeted 15 percent increase.

Cooperative Extension was not able to persuade five grocery stores to adopt the Best Bagging Practices Guide and develop a method of measuring the use of reusable bags. Also, the department was unable to attract 12 new volunteers to assist in the Adopt-A-Spot project in Newton, attracting only 10 new volunteers.

In alignment with the Farm and Food Sustainability initiative, Cooperative Extension promoted and supported the local agriculture economy. The Foothills Farm School consisted of a six-month educational program to train beginning and transitioning farmers how to be a viable small-scale, economically sustainable farm enterprise--28 individuals enrolled, 26 graduated. The department also worked with NC Farm Link and Western NC Farm Link to more efficiently and effectively match landowners with surplus land and farmers interested in using the land for fruit/vegetable production. In support of fruit and vegetable production, a fruit and vegetable grower inventory was completed and will be maintained on an ongoing basis. The department has also increased the number of farmers using

the EcoComplex by 33 percent. Finally, Cooperative Extension helped to expand the agriculture industry by providing farm tours in May in conjunction with Eat, Drink, and Be Local.

Cooperative Extension launched a campaign to increase awareness of availability and benefits of local food. Eat, Drink, and Be Local accomplished most of this outcome by engaging local restaurants and hosting local foods community events (e.g. gardening and cooking classes). Additionally, to increase awareness, articles about local food topics appeared in local publications such as Newton's Observer News Enterprise monthly.

Cooperative Extension hosted meetings, workshops, and field days, as well as provided one-on-one assistance to 19 dairy farms, resulting in saving farmers \$20,000. The farmers adopted at least one of the following items: animal waste and fertilizer management (11 farmers); soil and plant tissue waste sampling by adopting, soil conservation practices (11 farmers); proper manure application equipment calibration (11 operators); record keeping and business management practices (18 farmers); and maintenance of animal waste operator certification (15 farmers).

The department increased the profitability of aspiring/existing forage and livestock producers by having an Area Agriculture Agent work with the Catawba Valley Cattlemen's Association to conduct a workshop on Forage Quality. 30 citizens participated in the workshop where the following topics were discussed: 1) forage sampling and nutrient analysis of harvested hay, 2) weight of average size round bales and 3) using the nutrient analysis and weights of bales to calculate if the nutrient requirements of cattle were being met. This workshop had the potential to save beef producers several hundred dollars.

The department continued to support the local agricultural economy and provide education on the safe and sustainable use of pesticides. 56 individuals attended class with 40 taking the pesticide exam and 32 (80 percent) passing.

Cooperative Extension achieved all of its Youth Education outcomes. Youth were assisted in acquiring knowledge and developing skills by having 234 youth participate in 4-H affiliated clubs, camps, and programs, 88 percent of which demonstrated improvement in five or more life skill areas, exceeding the goal of 50 percent. The outcome to have 40 middle and high school youth increase their capacity to enter and complete higher education after participating in 4-H affiliated programs was exceeded with 63 students improving their capacity. Youth critical thinking skills improved and knowledge in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) was increased by having 791 youth participate in 4-H affiliated STEM programs with 82 percent reporting improved ability in STEM. This exceeded the goal of 600 youth participants and 50 percent of youth reporting improvement.

In the area of Environmental Protection, Cooperative Extension achieved its outcome by having 141 individuals participate in an educational program with 122 willing to implement what they had learned, particularly making good choices to avoid pesticide runoff and drift to protect the environment.

Cooperative Extension partnered with other Catawba County agencies to increase the ability of 225 adults and youth to make healthy food choices, increase physical activity, and reduce risk factors for chronic disease. This outcome was achieved with 314 adults and youth participating with 78 percent of adults and 61 percent of youth reporting that they were able to move toward their personal wellness goal.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICES

Statement of Purpose

North Carolina Cooperative Extension - Catawba County Center is a cooperative educational agency sponsored jointly by the United States Department of Agriculture, North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, and Catawba County. It provides Catawba County citizens with scientifically based information and informal educational opportunities focused on local needs and issues in four major areas: Agriculture, 4-H and Youth, Local Food System Development, and Family and Consumer Science.

Agriculture

Outcomes

1. To educate new, beginning, or transitioning farmers on current and alternative enterprises, NC Cooperative Extension will host three field days and/or trainings to demonstrate different sustainable and alternative production techniques including but not limited to livestock production, crop production, best management techniques, soil health and fertility, and season extension techniques. 50 percent of all participants will report an increase in knowledge through pre and post surveys, with 15 percent planning to adopt/expand their farm enterprise based on the knowledge gained from the field days. Success and impact will be measured through pre and post surveys, one-on-one contact and farm visits.
2. To increase, support, and improve row crop production and farm profitability of the Catawba County's row crop producers while also slowing the loss of the County's farmland, two row crop presentations (e.g. best practices in soybean productions, cultural practices, agrochemical use, pest management, variety selection, etc.) will be held during Fiscal Year 2015/16. 50 percent of evaluation respondents will self-report a behavior change in their row crop production technique.
3. Fifty horse owners or horse industry users will increase their knowledge of horse management as a result of participating in educational programs, receiving newsletters/media releases or through personal assistance on weed control and pasture management on small acreage, farm management, disease control and prevention, horse evaluation/selection, hay and feed evaluation and horse waste management. Success will be measured using post-survey evaluations. 50 percent of the individuals served will agree that their needs were met or they implemented at least one recommended best management practice.
4. To increase farm sustainability, NC Cooperative Extension will host meetings, workshops, or field days, and will provide one-on-one assistance and informal feedback to 30 beef/dairy farmers or confinement animal operations. Successful outreach will be determined by:
 - a. 65 percent of producers will soil test or have their nutrient waste analyzed
 - b. 45 percent of producers will implement soil and pasture conservation practices
 - c. 10 percent will utilize forage/feed analysis to improve their feeding protocol
 - d. 65 percent of producers will maintain their animal waste operator certification (based on when they were permitted and whether they achieved six credit hours of continuing education within three years).

4-H and Youth

Outcomes

5. 140 youth ages 5-18 will develop targeted life skills and gain new subject matter knowledge as a result of participating in volunteer-led 4-H clubs, short-term and skill-building competitive programs. 50 percent of the participants will show will increase subject matter knowledge and life skill development by a minimum of 20 percent with impact measured using a written evaluation completed by participating families, successful completion of skill building competitive programs, club expansion and development.
6. 700 students will participate in programs focused on healthy lifestyles and/or STEM education, which are key program areas identified for programming through National 4-H council. Programs will be offered through school classrooms and out-of-school settings with the intent to reinforce and extend grade level objectives. Youth participating in the healthy living program will increase their knowledge about and adopt positive healthy living behaviors related to healthy eating, avoiding substance use, and social and emotional development. Youth participating in STEM programs will increase their knowledge of science, technology, engineering and math; show an increased interest in STEM, and improve their understanding of how STEM is used in everyday life. 75 percent of the participating students will show a 20 percent improvement in their knowledge based on evaluations completed by youth or adults working with youth. Changes in knowledge and interest will be measured with written evaluations and evidence of application.
7. Thirty high school students, reflecting diverse backgrounds, will improve their leadership, citizenship, and college readiness skills participating in teen leadership programs such as Catawba County Youth Council, 4-H Ambassador, 4-H County Council, and college-preparedness programs. 100 percent of the teens will show an improvement in skills in at least one identified area. Skill development will be measured through pre and post training evaluations, completion of leadership portfolios, and the number of youth aspiring to advance to higher education.

Local Food System Development

Outcomes

8. To increase the capacity of local farmers, restaurants, and individuals to participate in the local food economy, during the third week of June (culminating on Father's Day), NC Cooperative Extension will hold a local foods awareness week called Eat, Drink and Be Local. The number of restaurants serving local food during the week will increase from four to five.
9. In order to promote agricultural literacy and to build a sense of connection to local food production within the general public, NC Cooperative Extension's public farm tours will include 14 farms with 1,309 visitors participating, a 10 percent increase from the Fiscal Year 2014/2015's goal of 1,190. 50 percent of respondents will report increased willingness to purchase locally produced foods.
10. To address gaps in consumer knowledge of purchasing, preparing, and preserving fresh foods, NC Cooperative Extension will host six events that educate the public on using fresh fruits and vegetables. Sixty consumers will report via written evaluation a greater understanding of how to cook with fresh fruits and vegetables and 20 percent will report plans for incorporating more fresh fruits and vegetables into their diets.

Food and Farm Sustainability Plan

Outcomes

11. To promote and support the local agricultural economy, being defined as within 75 miles of the center point of Catawba County, NC Cooperative Extension will provide educational programming that will increase the knowledge of 60 interested producers on different aspects of agricultural production such as fruit and vegetable production, livestock production, best farm management practices, and new direct marketing opportunities, which would enable them to begin/expand production. 50 percent of participants will report plans to begin/expand production or marketing efforts.
12. To recruit future fruit and vegetable producers, NC Cooperative Extension will further develop a youth component to educational programming. At least 30 youth will participate in the programming with 50 percent of participants reporting an interest in gardening and 25 percent of participants starting their own fruit and/or vegetable garden.
13. In collaboration with Catawba County Library and their community garden project, four fruit and vegetable gardening classes will be hosted for the general public before June 2016. The library's community garden project provides an added community amenity that contributes to building a healthy community by providing opportunities for all ages to learn about gardening and by helping to produce healthy foods that are shared with local people in need of nutritious meals. A total of 50 participants will report knowledge gained in different aspects of fruit and vegetable gardening. 85 percent of the participants will report that they increased their physical activity, learned how to start or improve their gardening skills, or gained a stronger sense of well-being by helping local people have access to healthier foods. The garden production outreach will result in 1000 pounds of fresh produce for meal production or distribution at identified local food assistance program during growing seasons.