

# COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICES

## Key Function Organization Chart

### Cooperative Extension Services

**1.0 FTEs**  
**\$407,735**

## Department Services

The Catawba County Cooperative Extension Service is an 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. The Catawba County Extension Service is committed to executing prescribed actions and achieving goals described in the Catawba County Farm and Food Sustainability Plan (adopted by the Board of Commissioners in 2013) in the areas of Agriculture, 4-H and Youth, and Local Food System Development.

## Budget Highlights

### COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Organization: 310050

	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Current	2017/18 Requested	2017/18 Adopted	Percent Change
<b>Revenues</b>					
State	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Local	0	0	0	0	0%
Miscellaneous	30,054	28,950	21,150	21,150	-26.9%
General Fund	319,275	370,285	386,526	386,585	4.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$349,329</b>	<b>\$399,235</b>	<b>\$407,676</b>	<b>\$407,735</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>					
Personal Services	\$46,979	\$45,151	\$48,670	\$48,729	7.9%
Supplies & Operations	272,296	354,084	359,006	359,006	1.4%
Capital	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$319,275</b>	<b>\$399,235</b>	<b>\$407,676</b>	<b>\$407,735</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
<b>Employees</b>					
Permanent	0.80	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.0%
Hourly	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

The budget's increase from the previous year is driven by the State's most recent benefits changes for Cooperative Extension employees.

## Performance Measures

### FISCAL YEAR 2017/18

In promoting Catawba County's Farm and Food Sustainability Plan and the County's Strategic Plan, Cooperative Extension will continue to educate the community on agriculture (from local gardening to intensive livestock) and youth leadership. The department will educate new, beginning, and 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.

### MID-YEAR FISCAL YEAR 2016/17

At mid-year, Cooperative Extension Services (CES) was on target to achieve or had achieved its all 12 outcomes for Fiscal Year 2016/17. CES was on target to increase, support, and improve row crop production by hosting/scheduling 5 presentations. In the autumn, two training sessions regarding “hedging” and “market options” were held for Catawba County's cattle producers. To address gaps in consumer knowledge of purchasing, preparing, and preserving fresh foods, a home food preservation class was offered at the Conover Library where 6 participants learned safe procedures for canning high and low acid foods that they grow or purchase. In collaboration with Catawba County Library and its community garden project, from July through November 14 gardening presentations were provided at Patrick Beaver Memorial, Newton, and Maiden Libraries to over 500 participants (over 100 different individuals), improving their garden management.

The 4-H program continued to develop student character and leadership. Nearly 95 high school students were involved in the following educational programs designed to improve their skills in leadership, citizenship, and college readiness: ASPIRE, Youth Council, NC 4-H Ambassador, and Juntos. At the mid-year, there were 15 4-H clubs and plans to start two new clubs in cooperation with the Sherrills Ford and Claremont branch libraries.

### FISCAL YEAR 2015/16

Cooperative Extension achieved 12 of its 13 outcomes (92 percent success rate) for Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year	Total Outcomes	Achieved	Not Achieved	Success Rate
2015/16	13	12	1	92%
2014/15	17	15	2	88%
2013/14	17	14	3	82%

2015/16. The department conducted the Foothills Farm School (FFS), a training curriculum geared toward farmers that integrates business principles and production practices. FFS taught 27 beginning and existing farmers over seven months. As a result, 97 percent of participants indicated they were able to avoid financial mistakes and 76 percent reported that they learned techniques to increase profits. The FFS also had specialized trainings tailored to the needs of the local area, such as developing an integrated parasite management approach to control intestinal worms in goats and sheep. Another outcome met involved increasing, supporting, and improving row crop production and farm profitability by hosting programs on soil health and herbicide resistance and insect management. Most of the 48 participants in the soil health program informed

the department that they would use conservation tillage, crop rotation, and other soil sustaining/enriching techniques. The row crop presentation had 22 participants, of which 100 percent reported that the positively contributed to farm profitability.

Cooperative Extension increased beef/dairy farm sustainability by hosting workshops that resulted in 65 percent of producers testing their soil for nutrient waste, 45 percent implementing soil and pasture conservation practices, 10 percent using forage/feed analysis to improve feeding protocol, and 79 percent maintaining their animal waste operator certification.

The department's 4-H programs were very successful in Fiscal Year 2015/16. In regards to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and Health Living education, 1,847 elementary and middle school students participated in programs offered in all three school systems. Twenty-eight educators received curriculum, training, and assistance from staff that supported program implementation. In the area of volunteer-led 4-H clubs, 256 youth (82.9 percent higher than the goal) ages 5-18 participated in programs to help youth develop skills, explore new interests, and introduce them to 4-H. The last 4-H outcome saw 63 high school students participate in leadership, citizenship, and college readiness 4-H program offerings. Nearly half of those students took steps to improve their ACT score increasing the likelihood of gaining college entrance and earning college scholarships. In keeping with youth development, the department sought to recruit future fruit and vegetables producers by youth-focused programming. The Claremont and Catawba Elementary Quest program had an average of 30 participants, of which 92 percent rated gardening as favorable, a 24 percentage point increase.

Cooperative Extension sought to increase the capacity of local farmers, restaurants, and individuals to participate in the local food economy by organizing a week-long Eat, Drink, Be Local celebration. The week included three farm tours, which had approximately 70 percent of over 100 participants report that they would purchase more local food as a result of the tour; two cooking demonstrations with 140 participants located at the Hickory Farmers' Market and the Public Health Farmers' Market, which led to 87 percent (121) participants agreeing to try the demonstrated recipe; and the Farm-to-Fork Feast located at Market on Main with 265 people in attendance. Additionally, to address the gaps in consumer knowledge of purchasing, preparing, and preserving fresh foods, the department hosted nutrition education and food preservation classes. The director also created the Advanced Gardener program, which is held monthly at the Patrick Beaver Memorial Library, Newton Library, and Maiden Library. Approximately 120 people regularly attend this program to learn about fruits and vegetables.

The last outcome achieved was a joint venture with the Library. In support of the Library's community garden project, six fruit and vegetable gardening programs were held with 78 attendees. All program participants reported learning a new gardening skill and /or increased their physical activity.

The lone outcome not met by Cooperative Extension sought to promote agricultural literacy and to build a sense of connection to local food production with the public by increasing the number of visitors on the farm tours by 10 percent to 1,309. Due to a continued vacancy in the Local Food Agent position, this outcome was not achieved.

# Outcomes

## AGRICULTURE

1. To increase, support, and improve row crop production and Catawba County row crop producers' farm profitability while also slowing the loss of the county's farmland, two row crop presentations (e.g. best practices in soybean productions, herbicide resistance management, agrochemical use, pest management, variety selection, etc.) will be held. At least 3 credits will be gained by participants towards X, N, D, O pesticide license requirements and/or Certified Crop Advisor continuing education credits.
2. In alignment with the County's strategic plan and to educate Catawba County livestock farmers about pasture management in order to meet the nutritional needs of livestock, NC Cooperative Extension will host three meetings and/or farm demonstrations. Farmers will gain an understanding of grass species growth patterns, regional disease patterns, and the nutritional needs of grass pastures. This knowledge will aid in addressing environmental, disease, and low production challenges resulting in increased length of time that pastures can be grazed by livestock or an increase in forage production. Eighty percent of farmers at meetings or demos will increase their knowledge which will be measured by pre and post surveys. Data will be collected through a six-month follow up call or a farm visit to measure changes made on farms due to information received at these events.
3. Two meetings will be provided to focus on successful ways to harvest and market livestock animals. Eighty percent of farmers at the meetings will increase their knowledge of meat marketing options. Pre and post surveys will determine comprehension. Data will be collected through a nine-month follow up call or farm visit to measure changes made in participants' marketing habits due to the information received at these events.
4. In pursuit of the County's strategic plan and to support small farm development, Cooperative Extension will develop an educational program on types of equipment and technology available for small farmers and market gardeners. At the completion of this program potential users of such equipment and technology will complete an assessment of what tools would be most useful for them in their production systems. This assessment will provide guidance for the development of a tool and equipment library.
5. In support of agritourism development and the County's strategic plan, Cooperative Extension will develop a group of farms interested in or currently operating in agritourism with information to be shared with the public (contact info, activities, products for sale, etc.). At least 5 of the farms will be highlighted in programmed farm tours during the FY 17/18 year.

## LOCAL FOOD AND HEALTHY EATING

1. To support the County's strategic plan and in collaboration with the Catawba County Library and its community garden project, a monthly gardening program will be continued

in 2017 and 2018, January through November. A total of 50 participants will report knowledge gained in different aspects of fruit and vegetable gardening. 80 percent of the participants will report that they started or increased their production and/or consumption of produce as a result of the program.

2. To educate groups in safe food-handling practices and support the County's strategic plan, the Family and Consumer Science Agent will offer 5 ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification classes, a Farm-to-Fork food safety training for farmers' market vendors, telephone assistance, and home food safety classes upon request. Pre/post tests or end-of-session retrospective evaluations will be used to assess increases in knowledge. Hands-on activities will be evaluated by observation. For ServSafe participants, achieving a passing score on the certification exam will serve as the evaluation. At least 125 individuals will increase knowledge of safe food handling practices and it is expected that 60 percent of individuals participating in ServSafe certification training will achieve a passing score on the exam. Collaborators include Catawba County Environmental Health, local farmers' market managers and community organizations.
3. To promote consumption of local foods and safe home food preservation practices, the Family and Consumer Sciences agent will collaborate with farmers' market managers and local groups to offer 10 community events that will include food demonstration-tasting activities, two pressure canner lid clinics, two home food preservation classes and additional presentations for consumers and other groups upon request. Telephone assistance will be provided to home food preservers. Participants will receive instruction, recipes and other helpful information to help them access and use local foods. Evaluation will be accomplished using a variation of the Rapid Market Assessment where participants provide feedback on recipes they taste, observation during hands-on activities and pre/post tests. At least 50 percent of participants in home preservation will reported an increased ability to store more produce for home consumption.

## **YOUTH AND 4-H**

1. In alignment with the County's strategic plan, two hundred youth ages 5-18 will develop targeted life skills and gain new subject matter knowledge as a result of participating in long-term 4-H units and programs and skill-building competitive programs. 50 percent of the participants will increase subject matter knowledge and life skill development by a minimum of 20 percent with impact measured using a written evaluation completed by participants, demonstration of mastery of skill, and individual accomplishments of youth.
2. In alignment with the County's strategic plan, eight hundred students will participate in programs focused on healthy lifestyles, leadership, and 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.