

Cooperative Extension Services

Organization: 310050

	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Current	2016/17 Requested	2016/17 Approved	Percent Change
Revenues					
State	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Local	1,662	0	0	0	0%
Miscellaneous	19,551	33,775	22,050	28,950	-14.3%
General Fund	330,856	311,796	364,650	370,285	18.8%
Total	\$352,069	\$345,571	\$386,700	\$399,235	15.5%
Expenses					
Personal Services	\$28,990	\$42,965	\$44,847	\$45,151	5.1%
Supplies & Operations	303,528	302,606	341,853	354,084	17.0%
Capital	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	\$332,518	\$345,571	\$386,700	\$399,235	15.5%
Employees					
Permanent	0.80	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.0%
Hourly	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0%
Total	0.80	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.0%

Budget Highlights

Cooperative Extension's budget increased by 14.9 percent, \$51,516 more than Fiscal Year 2015/16. The budget includes a full year of funding for previously vacant positions of a full-time Local Foods Agent, half-time Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, and part-time Livestock agent, and to cover scheduled compensation and retirement adjustments.

Performance Measurement

Fiscal Year 2016/17

In promoting Catawba County's Farm and Food Sustainability 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.

Fiscal Year 2015/16

At mid-year, Cooperative Extension Services (CES) was on target to achieve or had achieved its 17 outcomes for Fiscal Year 2015/16. CES is on target to educate new, beginning, and 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, was scheduled for April 2016. 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, which is a multi-county youth summer program that focuses on entrepreneurship, with 43 youth participating.

Fiscal Year 2014/15

Cooperative Extension achieved 14 of its 17 outcomes (82 percent success rate) for Fiscal Year 2014/15. The department provided training to 111 green industry professionals in the nursery, greenhouse and landscape business, of which 91 (82 percent) of those individuals increased their awareness. The economic impact from this training was \$83,250. Cooperative Extension hosted two field days to educate new, beginning, and transitional farmers on current and alternative enterprises. The first field day took place in October 2014 and focused on winter squash had 15 participants. At least 10 participants stated that they gained knowledge and 5 participants stated that they planned to grow on of the various types of winter squashed demoed at the field day. The second field day was a collaborative effort between Cooperative Extension, Catawba County Soil & Water, USDA Natural Resource Conservation District, and Russell Hedrick Farms. The field day had four stations with the topics of incorporating cover crops into grazing systems, different species of cover crops, and understanding and evaluating soil health. A total of 46 participants attended the field day, with 32 intending to grow a mixed species cover crop as a result of the training.

The department's 4-H programs were very successful in Fiscal Year 2014/15. In regards to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and Health Living education, 1,350 elementary and middle school students participated in programs offered in all three school systems. Fifty-six educators received curriculum, training, assistance and support from Cooperative Programs to support implementation of programs with students. In the area of volunteer-led 4-H clubs, 255 youth 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 32 high school students representing 11 schools comprise the Catawba County Youth Council. This experience proved valuable as 90 percent of the students improved skills in the following six areas: leading a business meeting, planning and leading a project; working as part of a team; taking with an elected official about a concern; honoring commitments; and interacting with adults.

In an effort to diversify local agricultural production and to educate the local minority population on various types of crops, 16 Southeast Asian farmers attended crop sessions (which include sessions on: winter squash, asparagus, mushroom, brassicas, blueberries, and peppers/tomatoes). Each session included information on growing and managing the crop, harvesting and storage of the crop, identifying some common disease and pest related to the specific crop, and some possible way of marketing the crop whether through direct market, retail, or to wholesalers. Of the 16 participants, 10 participants (62.5 percent) stated they gained knowledge in identifying potential pest in the crops they intended to grow; all sixteen participant (100 percent) stated they gained knowledge in harvesting and storing crops; and 14 producers (87.5 percent) stated they gained knowledge in growing and managing a specialty crop.

Cooperative Extension sought to increase the capacity of local farmers, restaurants, and individuals to participate in the local food economy by organizing four events to educate attendees on how to purchase, market, and find local foods. All the events culminated in the *Eat, Drink, and Be Local* week June 15-12, 2015, which had hundreds of citizens participating. The department also held an Agri-Tourism Day to promote agricultural literacy within the general public. Eleven farms and 2,303 visitors participated in the event. Cooperative Extension looked to promote and support the local agricultural economy by providing workshops and educational programming within 75 miles of Catawba County. Nearly 200 farmers from the greater Catawba County area received training on networking, marketing, growing (blueberries and mushrooms), and breeding.

The two outcomes Cooperative Extension did not achieve focused on beautification and horse management. In regards to beautification, the department was unable to coordinate 2 litter collection events, implement a youth education project, and persuade local high schools or middle schools to participate in the Trex Plastic Bag Recycling Challenge. The horse management outcome was unsuccessful due to lack of attendance. Horse ownership is not production agriculture, and participation in these training/educational opportunities has diminished considerably over the last three years. Based on low community interest, these trainings will no longer be offered in Fiscal Year 2015/2016.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICES

Statement of Purpose

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.

Agriculture

1. To educate new, beginning, or transitioning farmers on how to be sustainable (economically profitable over the long term, good stewards of the land, and maintaining or enhancing the quality of life for area farmers), NC Cooperative Extension will host a series of workshops, field days, and/or trainings, entitled the Foothills Small Farms Sustainable Series. Fifty percent of all participants will report an increase in knowledge through pre-and-post surveys. Fifteen percent of those participants will plan to adopt new practices or expand their farm enterprise. Success and impact will be measured through pre and post surveys, one-on-one contact and farm visits. (Farm and Food Sustainability Plan Actions items: 7A, 1B, 1C, 10C, 3C, 12B)
2. 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. Fifty percent of evaluation respondents (15) will self-report a behavior change towards improving their row crop production technique within five months of presented information. (Farm and Food Sustainability Plan Actions items: 7A, 10E, 11B)
3. To educate Catawba County livestock farmers about pasture management and to meet the nutritional needs of livestock, NC Cooperative Extension will host three meetings or farm demonstrations. Fifty percent of farmers (25) 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 farm visit to observe the adoption of at least one best management practice. (Farm and Food Sustainability Plan Actions items: 7A, 10E, 11B)
4. In order to ensure Catawba County cattle producers have access to critical information on financial aspects of agriculture, two training sessions regarding "hedging" and "market options" will be provided so that producers can make informed decisions about these financial instruments. Fifty percent (10) of farmers at the meetings will increase their knowledge of hedging and future options and how to use them as determined by pre-and-post surveys. Data will be collected through a nine-month follow up call or farm visit to record changes in participants' comprehension of "hedging" and "market options" techniques. (Farm and Food Sustainability Plan Actions items: 7A, 10E, 11B)

4-H and Youth

5. 150 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 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. (Farm and Food Sustainability Plan Actions items: 7A, 6B)

6. 800 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. (Farm and Food Sustainability Plan Actions items: 7A, 6B)
7. Forty 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 and completion of leadership portfolios. (Farm and Food Sustainability Plan Actions items: 7A)

Local Food System Development

8. To increase the capacity of local farmers, restaurants, and individuals to participate in the local food economy, NC Cooperative Extension will hold a local foods awareness week called Eat, Drink, and Be Local during the fourth week of June. Five restaurants will participate by serving one dish made mostly (at least 50 percent) from local (within 75 miles) products. Events will also be held at two farmer markets and one retail store. (Farm and Food Sustainability Plan Actions items: 4B, 6A, 6B, 7A, 7C, 8A, 10A, 15B)
9. 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. (Farm and Food Sustainability Plan Actions items: 7A, 6B, 7C)
10. To encourage and increase the number of small farms in the County, the small farms demonstration site will incorporate at least five new farmers into the existing site. These farmers will gain training on topics from business planning, budgeting, good agricultural practices (GAPs), farm production, marketing, and best management practices (BMP) at the demonstration site and in-class through NC Cooperative Extension. To help these small farmers become successful in the changing agricultural industry, at least two farmers utilizing the site will have written a GAPs (Good Agricultural Practices) plan by June of 2017. At least 2 farmers from the small farms demonstration site will have completed a business plan by June of 2017 with a transition plan off

the small farms demonstration site (Farm and Food Sustainability Plan Actions items: 7A, 11A, 7B, 10E, 10G, 14B)

11. Cooperative Extension will provide educational workshops, consultation, curriculum and training for 25 educators to learn how to start and incorporate gardening into their classrooms and school-age child care programs. At least 30 percent of the total participants will plan to start a garden or incorporate one of the activities taught into their programs; at least two schools in Catawba County will have a garden by June 2017. (Farm and Food Sustainability Plan Actions items: 7A, 8B, 11A, 7B, 7C, 6B)

12. In collaboration with Catawba County Library and its community garden project, a monthly gardening program (initiated in January 2016) will continue through Fiscal Year 2016/17. 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. (Farm and Food Sustainability Plan Actions items: 7A, 11A, 7B, 7C, 8E, 14A, 6B)