

ASRED
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Produce Auction Continues to Grow and Leads Local Food Effort in Southside Virginia:

Marketing of produce and fruits in Southside Virginia has traditionally been limited to roadside stands, direct farm sales, farmer's markets, and CSA's. In addition, these types of marketing avenues are limited on the amount or quantity that an individual producer could market at any given time. Many producers had a desire to expand production and to have a ready market for their produce and fruit. Most producers did not want to spend time at stands or farmer's markets to market a relatively small amount of produce and fruits. The Southside Produce Auction, LLC held its first wholesale produce and fruit auction on May 1 2012. Since that time, 52 auctions conducted and sales ran two days a week through the end of October. In 2013, the auction built a new facility, added an additional 6 sales, and increased its volume of produce sold by 300,000lbs. With the help of extension's efforts, the 2015 Southside Produce Auction again experienced growth. Produce and fruit sales increased from 1,000,000 lbs. in 2014 to over 1,750,000 lbs. in 2015. In just four years, produce sold at the auction has gone from 350,000 to over 1,750,000lbs. This has occurred while maintaining average prices above most wholesale prices. Now growers from 27 counties sale regularly with the auction. Sales revenue has increased over 320% since 2012. The Auction has brought over 26,000 visitors to Charlotte County since it began.

Turf and Landscape Urban Nutrient Management Planner Training and Certification

Program: Virginia currently has nutrient management Standards and Criteria and corresponding Turf and Landscape Nutrient Management Planner training and certification programs administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). This program, initiated in 2009, was developed through a collaborative effort between DCR, and VCE. They collaborated in the development of a state/regional training manual to support the certification process. Standards and Criteria were updated, so these changes were incorporated into new presentations. The award-winning Urban Nutrient Management Handbook (recognized by both the American Society of Agronomy and the American Society of Agriculture and Biological Engineers) 13-chapter manual is published through VCE. Personnel from VCE, and DCR collaborated on 2-day training sessions for 52 participants in spring and fall training sessions. The audience included turfgrass and allied green industry professionals, extension agents, and Master Gardener Volunteers desiring to become certified plan writers. Of the 52 participants in the urban nutrient management training program, 26 new urban nutrient management planners were certified in 2015. An additional 4,557 acres of turf under an Urban Nutrient Management Plan was added from these and previously certified trainers that came through this program (137 prior to 2015). Total Urban Nutrient Management Plan acreage is 36,051.

Virginia Impacts of Teen Cuisine on the Dietary Habits and Food Preparation Skills of

Adolescents: This statewide effort seeks to educate today's adolescents on healthy, inexpensive food preparation techniques to use at home. Teen Cuisine is a skill-based

curriculum that focuses on food preparation and safety. It includes six lessons, each lasting 90 minutes. It focuses on key components of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, including MyPlate, the food label, sources of fat, whole grains, and nutritious snacks. This program is supported by the Youth Voice: Youth Choice 4-H Healthy Living grant. Through interdisciplinary programming (4-H, FCS, and FNP) together we reached a diverse group of over 12,000 youth between the ages of 12-19 in 2015. Students completed either a pre-post evaluation, as required for the Family Nutrition Program staff, or the 4-H Common Measures Healthy Living post-test as required by the Youth Voice Youth Choice grant. 370 Common Measure evaluations were completed for the 7th-12th grade participants. As a result, based on these post-tests evaluations, teen participants reported a variety of positive dietary impacts: 90% indicated that as a result of Teen Cuisine they learned about healthy food choices and the importance of nutrition in planning meals and snacks:73% indicated that as a result of Teen Cuisine they are making healthier food choices and cooking with their families: 68 % indicated that as a result of Teen Cuisine they are changing behaviors to eat healthier. This translated into:

- 78% reporting that they ate more fruits and vegetables
- 67% more whole grains
- 61% less junk food
- 64% less saturated fat
- 67% indicated they drank less soda
- 80% more water

In terms of food preparation and cooking skills:

- 91% reported that they washed hands before they cooked
- 86% reported improved knife skills
- 78% reported using recipes when cooking
- 74% indicated that they cooked more

Virginia 4-H CHARACTER COUNTS!: The Virginia 4-H CHARACTER COUNTS! program helps youth sort right from wrong and encourages them to use universally accepted values to strengthen their character. The national program, developed by the Josephson Institute of Ethics and adopted by Virginia 4-H, teaches trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship as the six pillars of character. Age appropriate games, role playing, discussion, reflections, and real world examples make these character values understandable. In 2015, the Virginia 4-H CHARACTER COUNTS! program reached 11,042 youth, ages 5-18. Virginia 4-H also participated in the 2015 Report Card of Ethics of American Youth survey. The survey was distributed at the 2015 State 4-H Congress and a total of 234 responses were received. Respondents were between the ages of 13-19 and the majority, 71%, were female. Results from this survey indicate that the respondents are ethical and place high value on being ethical. When asked, in your personal opinion, how important to you is each of the following? 91% rated having a good moral character as either essential (69%) or very important (22%), 85% stated that being thought of as ethical and honorable was essential (57%) or very important (28%), 92% stated that helping others was essential (59%) or very important (33%), 93% rated having trusting personal relationships as essential (72%) or very important (21%), and 100% strongly agreed or agreed that it was important for them to be a person with good character.

VCE Summer Internships: For more than 10 years, VCE has offered summer internships to students and recent graduates. In 2016, we had 46 positions available in 39 Unit offices. One hundred applicants from 7 states and 23 universities applied for these coveted positions. Applicants must be at least rising juniors, have a minimum GPA of 2.5 and be in a field of study that would qualify them to be hired as an Extension Agent. The experience is for 10 weeks and pays \$12/hour. Unit offices that wish to participate in the program must secure half of the intern wages (\$2400) from local sources. A strong on-campus connection between the Internship program and the Introduction to Cooperative Extension course provides a significant number of motivated Virginia Tech student applicants. A growing number of these student/interns are also now receiving course credit for their experience. While interns usually focus on one particular program area during their time with us, Units are expected to expose them to the work of all program areas. Supervising agents are encouraged to routinely discuss and help the intern reflect on their experience. Interns are required to maintain a blog or some other form of a record of their internship, and a formal evaluation is conducted with the intern at the end of the summer. Interns learn new skills, and gain valuable understanding of what an extension career looks like. At the same time, agents and district directors are able to evaluate interns for their suitability to an Extension career. The internship provides Units with some sorely needed extra hands during the busy summer months, but the greatest benefit of the internship program is filling the pipeline of new agent candidates. In the past year approximately 25% of our agent hires have come from the internship ranks.

International Professional Development Experiences for Agents: It is well documented that international learning and service experiences can re-energize mid-career employees. With that in mind, we set out to create international professional development experiences for agents that have advanced from our basic entry level. Two experiences were created, each independent of the other. The first is with Ireland's Extension equivalent, TEAGASC, the Agriculture and Food Development Authority of Ireland. We established an exchange between our agriculture agents and their agriculture advisors. Two of their Advisors came to Virginia for three weeks followed by two of our Agents following the Advisors back to Ireland for a three week stay. Based on pre-trip communications each organization crafted an experience of farm visits, field days, workshops, experiment station tours, in-service trainings, etc. Ireland was specifically chosen due to the lack of a language barrier and because of the similarity of agriculture systems. Benefits include technology and production practices that were learned that could be adapted in both locations, as well as new educational delivery methods that can be added to the toolbox. Our plans are to exchange one or two agents each year with TEAGASC.

The second international program is in Senegal, Africa. The College of Agriculture has an existing USAID Education and Research in Agriculture (ERA) project in Senegal. One of our agronomy Extension specialist involved in the ERA project recognized Senegal's need for the development of a youth development program like 4-H. Her enthusiasm motivated Senegalese university faculty to explore the possibilities, first by coming to Virginia to learn about Extension and 4-H, and second through an invitation to one of our 4-H specialists to travel there in 2015. In 2016, two Virginia 4-H agents were selected to accompany the 4-H specialist to spend three weeks in Senegal to continue to build the foundation of the 4-H program. Plans are to send two new agents there each year to continue training local leaders and university capacity building.

Administration: The state revenue expectations were not met and the planned salary increases planned for November have been canceled. The revised budget comes out in late August and may result in budget reductions. The general assembly did pass a bond package that includes \$22million for new livestock facilities.

Destination Areas: The university is modifying its short term strategic planning to focus on at this point 5 areas to place special emphasis when it comes to faculty individual and cluster hiring. It will also be of importance as new resources and partnerships become available. They will also be significant when the new advancement campaign begins in summer of 2017.

Rebranding: The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, including Virginia Cooperative Extension, as well as Virginia Tech are undergoing a rebranding process. The visibility of the College and Extension is not where it should be and the effort is to know how to place emphasis on advancement, partnerships and recruitment. The University will also have a new tag line.