

**STANLY COUNTY
2023
END OF YEAR
REPORT**

221 hours

of Workshops, Seminars,
& Hands-on Demonstrations

Department Wide Overview

2,404

Program Participants

173,430

Responses to citizens
through telephone, social
media, email, and other
non-face-to-face methods

174

Volunteers worked with
Agents to
extend outreach efforts

5,692

Volunteer hours
contributed

\$179,476

Value of the volunteer
hours contributed

\$42,617

was collected through
donations, grants, and user
fees to expand programs and
opportunities

MEET THE 2023 STANLY COUNTY TEAM

These professionals work together to meet the needs of local residents in the areas of Agriculture, Youth, Foods & More!



Molly Alexi
County Extension Director



Lydia Stegall
Extension Agent
Small Farms



Andrew Pfiefer
Extension Agent
Horticulture



Hayley Cowell
Extension Agent
Family & Consumer Sciences



Lisa Forrest
Administrative Assistant



Katelyn Stegall
Extension Agent
Livestock



Mandy Smith-Thompson
Extension Agent
4-H Youth Development

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INTRODUCTION

N.C. Cooperative Extension is a strategic partnership of N.C. State Extension, The Cooperative Extension Program at N.C. A&T State University, USDA-NIFA, and Stanly County. Stanly County Extension professionals translate research-based education from our state's land-grant system into everyday solutions through programs focused on Agriculture and Food, Health and Nutrition, and 4-H youth development.

Our Stanly County Cooperative Extension Staff is proud to serve the citizens of Stanly County by addressing issues and needs as identified by advisory groups, existing clients, and community partners.

Cooperative Extension provides educational opportunities to Stanly County citizens through workshops, training, and information requests via telephone, radio broadcasts, the newspaper, educational mailings, face-to-face contact with citizens, and website visits. Extension continually strives, through educating and empowering the community, to maximize the County's return on investment.

HEALTH & NUTRITION PROGRAMS



Goal: to provide a wealth of educational programs that address public health issues, improve economic well-being, and help people make healthier, better-informed decisions. Programs range from, food safety, and food preservation, cooking classes, budgeting, and healthy living programs in our schools, churches, and community centers.

So far 2023 Family and Consumer Sciences program successes include the completion of the L.I.F.T. program, the Extension Master Food Volunteer Training, Nutrition programming with both of our Senior Centers, the Senior Spirit Day, and the School Health Fair. Currently, FCS is offering the annual Home Canning Series.

1. **The L.I.F.T. Program** (lifelong improvements through fitness together) is a 16-session fitness program that was taught at Gold's Gym in Albemarle and also offered virtually as a collaborative effort with 7 other Extension county offices. 35 participants from Stanly County joined the program. All sessions were recorded and shared with individuals to continue using after the program ended. Participants gained strength, flexibility, and mobility while also gaining nutrition knowledge as a result of this program.
2. We had **4 new EMFVs** to graduate this year; we now have 6 Extension Master Food Volunteers to assist with any food programming. This was a hybrid training program in which they had 8 online training sessions and 1 in person as well as graduation luncheon. Volunteers are already planning to assist with summer canning classes and the summer 4-H Cooking Camp.
3. **Four nutrition lessons** were offered at each of the Senior Centers including topics such as Freezer meals, Modifying your Favorites, Best Cookware, and Cooking with Spices. Each class was followed by a virtual cooking class to share recipes that correlate with the nutrition topic taught that week. 17 Senior Citizens participated in the classes.
4. We set up a booth with a Strawberry and Spinach Salad Demo at the **Senior Spirit Day** held at EE Waddell on May 11. We reached approximately 100 senior citizens through this fair opportunity.
5. We set up a booth with a Garden Quesadilla Demo at the **School Health Fair** held at Atrium Stanly on May 22. We reached approximately 50 individuals through this fair opportunity.
6. Our **Home Canning Series** officially kicked off in April. We have been testing canner gauges and are offering 1 virtual and 4 hands-on classes at the Agri-Civic Center including Introduction to Canning, Canning Berries, Canning Tomatoes, Canning Jam, and Canning Meats. 30 participants have signed up for the classes so far.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



4-H is the largest youth organization in North Carolina and is open to all youth ages 5-18.

Mandy Smith-Thompson is our 4-H Youth Development Agent. She is a certified NC environmental educator and holds a bachelor's degree in zoology from NCSU and a graduate certificate in environmental studies from UNC-Wilmington.

4-H offers a wide variety of programs, projects, curricula, and activities. Popular 4-H events include presentations, judging contests, Project Record Books, and Overnight Camp. In 2023, 513 youth enhanced their knowledge of animals and agriculture; 392 enhanced their knowledge of consumer and family sciences. 10 youth attended sleep-away 4-H Camp at Camp Millstone, 2 on full scholarship and 8 on partial scholarship.

Stanly County's 4-H Summer Blast program provided 4-Hers the chance to learn about science and agriculture, as well as the opportunity to develop a range of life skills through summer day-camp workshops about nutrition, physical activity, nature, livestock, and the arts. In November, we hosted Kids in the Kitchen SPIN Club in which participants spent 6 weeks learning about nutrition and food preparation. In December, we hosted two Holiday Hangouts in which participants did a service project for animals at the Stanly County Humane Society, learned about dogs and cats and had some holiday fun. We continue to support our equine science focused Rocky River Riders club and are building the framework for several new clubs in 2024.

4-H also offered classroom curriculum materials in addition to club and individual projects. All Stanly Co. kindergarten classrooms had the opportunity to participate in the Butterfly Project, in which they cared for Painted Lady butterflies and witnessed the full butterfly life cycle. All 2nd grade classrooms had the opportunity to participate in the Embryology project in which they got to watch quail eggs hatch in their classroom.



LIVESTOCK

Katelyn Stegall is our Livestock Extension Agent. She works to provide educational programming for small and large scale livestock producers in Stanly County. In 2022, livestock sales reached \$69,847,509.00, making livestock a vital part of the county economy. Programs were offered in several areas to educate farmers to make their operations more efficient and profitable.

The Stanly County Livestock Program had a busy year in 2023! See some of the major program highlights below!

- **NC Farm School-**NC Farm School was an 8-week program designed to train small farmers and potential farmers in the basics of farm business management. During these 8 weeks, 25 participants learned these farm business management basics and were able to tour several farms growing and producing different products to see some hands-on management of these products.
- **4-H Livestock Programming-** Over 520 youth were reached in 2023 through the Stanly County livestock program
 - **Embryology-** Every Stanly County elementary school had at least one second-grade classroom to participate in the embryology program this year! Each participating classroom received 18 quail eggs to incubate and hatch. Students were able to help turn the eggs each day, and spent some time with the chicks when they hatched!
 - **The Barn Kids 4-H Club-** During the first half of 2023, the Barn Kids completed a spin cycle of club meetings. During these meetings club members learned about the different livestock species,
 - **Livestock Showmanship Clinic-** 18 youth spent a Saturday morning learning the basics of showing cattle, sheep, and goats before the start of the regional AgCarolina Farm Credit Showmanship Circuit.
 - **Stanly County Youth Livestock Classic-** Our biggest event of the year! In August, 53 youth showed over 100 animals including cattle, goats, and sheep. We brought back the sheep show this year after several years of only including cattle and goats and it was a huge success!
- **Pesticide Education-** In 2023, 13 hours of pesticide continuing education credits were offered, with 62 pesticide applicators receiving credits.
- **Amazing Grazing Pasture Management Program-** In July, 19 participants learned new strategies for pasture management in a program delivered in partnership with the Amazing Grazing program at NC State.

In addition to these programs, 44 other livestock producers increased their knowledge of livestock management practices in the areas of grazing management, health management, nutrition management, and reproduction through one-on-one farm visits and small workshops offered throughout the year.

Overall, 2023 was a great year for the livestock program. Our goal is and continues to be to educate livestock producers in Stanly County to help them be the best stewards of their animals they can be, and to be profitable while doing so! We look forward to everything 2024 has in store!



Horticulture

Andrew Pfeifer started as our new Horticulture Agent on June 1, 2023. In his first six months, he has offered a variety of programs through the local library as well as a houseplant program working with local breweries.

Andrew has been working very closely with local organizations, including Soil and Water, the Stanly County Beekeepers Association, the E.E. Waddell Center, and several schools to assist with new gardening programs as an advisory lead.

Andrew has also been working with Leadership Stanly, a local professional development organization to help restore and upgrade his demonstration garden spaces, particularly the vegetable demonstration area which will be receiving new raised beds and a picnic table to make the site more functional.

Work continues for the perennial demonstration garden located in front of the Agri-Civic Center. It is expected to contain over 50 species once completed.



Small Farms

Lydia Stegall joined our team as an area Small Farms Agent on May 15, 2023. She will be working with the farmer's markets and new small-scale farmers needing assistance with business and marketing plans. She will be managing the Visit NC Farms app.

Lydia graduated from NC State with a degree in Agricultural Business Management and a minor in Animal Science.

Lydia has been working on connecting with and forming relationships with small farms throughout the county. She is also working on forming strong partnerships with the farmers markets in hopes of partnering with them on projects.

Lydia will be offering programs such as produce safety training, drone training, and a farm business planning program. She looks forward to meeting more farmers and helping wherever the needs are.

