Dear Friend of Agriculture,

Like you, my agricultural agents and I stay very busy all year long. But we get especially busy this time of the year. The following brief articles provide information you might find useful or announcements of upcoming meetings or activities that may be of interest to you. If you need additional information about any of these topics, please contact the agent indicated. Our phone number and mailing address are located on the side of this page. For accommodations for persons with disabilities, contact the Extension agent in charge of the event at 910-671-3276 no later than five business days before the event.

Sincerely,

Everett Davis

Everett Davis
County Extension Director

/Tobacco Export Promotion Referendum

Domestic use of tobacco continues to decline causing tobacco companies to decrease their purchases from local tobacco farmers. Tobacco production in Robeson County has decreased from 16,000 acres in 1980 to less than 4,000 acres today. Tobacco Associates, Inc., was organized in 1947 to stimulate and assist foreign manufacturers in the use of U.S. flue-cured tobacco. Foreign markets still provide the greatest opportunity for sales. For over 60 years, active tobacco farmers have contributed 1/5 of one cent of every pound of tobacco they sell to support this effort. On Thursday, January 14, tobacco farmers over 18 years of age may vote whether or not they wish to continue this assessment. The official polling place for Robeson County is the Cooperative Extension Center. For more information contact Everett Davis (Everett_Davis@ncsu.edu).
Robeson County Cattlemen’s Association
Formed Looks to Have a Big Year in 2010

The Robeson County Livestock Association has benefited producers for almost 40 years. When the association first began, hogs were an up-and-coming commodity in the county and North Carolina. The association helped many producers drastically change their production systems from hogs on the ground to housed production systems. Since the 1970s, many changes have come to Robeson County and the various animal industries. With those changes, our association has had to change as well. It has often been said that cattle are now where hogs were those many years ago. That meaning, with some minor adjustments and tweaks to current management practices, Robeson could be a large component of the national feeder calf market system. To adjust for these opportunities, last spring, the association voted and passed the start-up of an additional group, a Robeson County Cattlemen’s Group. This group will fall under the Livestock Association but with the main purpose of marketing and managing calves more efficiently and setting up marketing alliance groups.

The Cattlemen’s Group had an exciting fall. The two most successful events were a Field Day in Maxton and the Livestock Association’s first Christmas dinner. The Field Day took place on a Friday afternoon at Kris Locklear’s farm in Maxton. Tony Mathis from Nichols Genetics was the speaker and talked about the advantages of bringing better genetics to your farm and marketing calves using trailer sales and direct marketing. The Field Day was very informative and included a walk around Kris’s farm to look at his cows, calves, and bulls. The Field Day did take an exciting turn when a sudden storm drenched the crowd with rain. The group got their exercise with a quick sprint to a nearby barn. The Field Day concluded with a wonderful pot-roast meal and homemade desserts in Kris’s garage.

The fall schedule concluded with a Christmas Banquet at Adelio’s in Lumberton. This year’s speaker was Robeson County’s own Dr. Ben Chavis. Dr. Chavis was born into a family of sharecroppers and left Robeson County on an athletic scholarship provided to him to attend Pima College and The University of Arizona. He has worked in farming, construction, education, and business and is the author of Crazy Like A Fox: One Principal’s Triumph in the Inner City with Carey Blakely. His educational model has been replicated in other schools serving low-income students with the same high academic results. In 2006, Ben started converting his farm in Saddletree on Rozier Church Road to raising cattle. He is working with Cooperative Extension and Natural Resources and Conservation Program to reintroduce native grasses, longleaf pine, and wildlife on the farm. His farm is a testament to the beauty of healthy pastures and cattle.

The association is excited about the many opportunities coming up in 2010, including the Cape Fear Cattlemen’s Conference on Thursday, January 14. The Extension Centers in Robeson, Bladen, Columbus, Hoke, and Scotland County will host the first annual conference at the Extension Center in Robeson County starting at 3:30 p.m. Vendors will have booths set up to visit during the breaks and dinner. There will be a $5 charge to be paid at the door. Three beef specialists from N.C. State will be presenting at the conference. Also, Bryan Blinson, from the N.C. Cattlemen’s Association, will give an update on the cattle industry. Speakers and topics include: Dr. Gary Hansen, NCSU Livestock Specialist, Replacement Heifer Development and Marketing; Dr. Matt Poore, NCSU Beef Specialist, Nutritional Management to Improve Returns to Cow/Calf Producers; and Dr. Mark Alley, NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine and Extension Veterinarian, Herd Health and Animal Welfare Update. For more information contact Robeson County Extension Livestock Agent Michelle Shooter (Michelle_Shooter@ncsu.edu).
Free Longleaf Pine Seedlings Available

Thanks to Louie Bodenhamer Tree Nursery in Rowland, free longleaf pine seedlings will be available at the Extension Center from 8:30 – 11:00 a.m. on Friday, January 22. According to Bodenhamer, landowners in Robeson and surrounding counties have been very supportive since he gave up tobacco production and diversified into longleaf pine seedling production. This is his way of saying thank you. Landowners will be provided up to 25 free containerized longleaf pine seedlings. Personnel from the Robeson County Forest Service will be on site to provide planting instructions and to answer questions. For more information contact Everett Davis.

Annual Awards and Recognition Banquet

The Robeson County Crop Promotion Association’s Annual Awards and Recognition Banquet will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 26, at the Extension Center. The featured speaker will be Tyris Jones, storyteller and humorous speaker from Laurinburg. Tyris was the state champion of the Bald Face Liars Competition last January and will be competing again the Saturday before our banquet. Our agribusinessmen provide this banquet to recognize our farmers for what they do to provide our foods and fibers. This is your “personal engraved” invitation to attend, but please call and let us know you are coming. For more information and to reserve your space contact Everett Davis.

Pecan Management from A to Z!

Are you one of those people who is stumped each year when your pecan tree does not produce like you think it should? Are you finding little holes in all of your pecans with nothing inside? Do not worry! You are not alone. Southeastern North Carolina is full of pecan trees not living up to their potential. If this sounds like you, then get your calendars ready.

North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Robeson County Center, is offering a “Pecan Management from A to Z” Workshop on Monday, February 8, from 6 to 8 p.m. Come join us as we go from A to Z in the life and care of a pecan tree. Bring your questions and comments and be ready for a night of interactive learning!

Mike Parker, NCSU Associate Professor of Horticulture, Extension Tree Fruit Specialist, will inform us on the best practices for producing high-quality pecans in the landscape. From fertilization to irrigation, he will address common myths and secrets of caring for a pecan tree. Kerrie Roach, Robeson County Extension Horticultural Agent, will discuss disease and insect management practices for pecans in the home setting. Not all insects and diseases are created equal. We will cover which insects and diseases are most damaging and what are the most cost effective methods to care for them.

There is no cost, but registration is required. To register, or for more information, contact Kerrie Roach (Kerrie_Roach@ncsu.edu).

This Is The Money You Could Be Making With Agritourism

A catchy little phrase similar to this has caused lots of people to think about the price they are paying for car insurance. I would like to encourage you to start thinking about the extra money you could be making by doing things on your farm that attract tourists and tourism dollars. Tourism is second only to agriculture in the impact to the economy of North Carolina. Agritourism and Cultural Tourism are the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry, and Robeson County has more agriculture and cultural diversity than any other county in the state. You would probably be surprised to learn the different types of rural and farm activities that people are willing to pay for, and you would be even more surprised to learn how much they are willing to pay.
Robeson County has recently hired an Extension Tourism Agent. Amanda Swisher is trained and ready to help you learn more about developing tourism opportunities on your farm. Please contact our office to learn more about agritourism.

If you are the least bit interested in agritourism, I encourage you to visit the NCDA Agritourism website at:

www.agr.state.nc.us/markets/agritourism/

You will learn much more if you become a member of the Agritourism Network Association and will learn even more if you join our group from Robeson County as we attend their State Convention in Greenville Thursday–Saturday, February 18-20. For more information contact Everett Davis.

Soybean Farmers – Bring Your Spouses to the Soybean Meeting

The North Carolina Soybean Producers Association uses your checkoff dollars to do a lot more than just promote biodiesel. They also educate consumers about the value of soy-based food products and can teach your spouse how to make delicious hors d’oeuvres and other dishes from soy meal and soy oil.

Dr. Jim Dunphy will be the featured speaker at our Tri-County Soybean Production Meeting beginning at 6 p.m. on Monday, February 22, at the Extension Center. While you are meeting in the auditorium, the food specialists and chefs from the N.C. Soybean Producers Association, along with Janice Fields, Robeson County Extension Foods and Nutrition Agent, will entertain and enlighten your spouse about soy foods in the kitchen. At 7 p.m., everyone will gather in the auditorium for a sponsored meal that will include an assortment of soy items that were prepared in the kitchen.

This is the first time we have ever provided a meeting like this. Please place this date on your calendar, and please make sure your spouse makes plans to come with you to the soybean meeting. She will be glad she did. For more information contact Everett Davis or Janice Fields (Janice_Fields@ncsu.edu).

Selecting Alternative Enterprises for Your Farm

Change is continuous in farming. Prices, farm programs, trade policies, technology, markets, and consumer preferences all change continuously, just to name some of the causes. Some farm enterprises benefit from these changes and some are harmed, so the search for profitable alternatives is a continuous challenge. There are seven important questions that should guide the search for alternative enterprises. Answering each one of these is important to achieving success.

1. Why are you interested in alternative enterprises?
2. What are consumers interested in buying and who will be your customers?
3. What are you planning to sell and how will you sell it?
4. Will your product require processing, and if so, how will you sell it?
5. What business and legal issues apply?
6. What resources will you need?
7. Will it be financially feasible and worthwhile?

These questions are easy to ask but not usually easy to answer. Sometimes the first answer you come up with is not workable or suitable and you have to back up and rethink your ideas. Realize that enterprise selection is a complicated and demanding process. It should be considered no different than evaluating any other business opportunity. The amount of time and energy spent in research should be directly related to the amount of capital at risk and the potential rewards. All of this takes a lot of work, but it is well worth taking time to make sure the idea you are considering will work and to avoid problems or disappointments down the road. For more information contact, Extension Area Farm Management Agent Nelson Brownlee (Nelson_Brownlee@ncsu.edu).
Upcoming Events

Private Applicator Pesticide Recertification Classes, O. P. Owens Agriculture Center, 455 Caton Road (Highway 72 West), Lumberton - Call 671-3276 to register. Contact Person – Kerrie Roach

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.</td>
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Forestry Issues – Carbon Credit Trading Opportunities for Private Forest Owners, Wednesday, January 13, 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., UNC – Pembroke - Contact Person – Everett Davis

Tobacco Associates Referendum, Thursday, January 14, 8:15 a.m. – 5:15 p.m., O. P. Owens Agriculture Center – See article in this newsletter for complete details. Contact Person – Everett Davis

Tobacco Fear Cattlemen’s Conference, Thursday, January 14, 3:30 – 7:30 p.m., O. P. Owens Agriculture Center - See article in this newsletter for complete details. Contact Person – Michelle Shooter

Joint Conference of Corn, Soybean, Small Grain, and Cotton Growers, Thursday – Friday, January 14 – 15, Riverfront Convention Center, New Bern, N.C. – Contact Person – Everett Davis

Price Risk Management Workshop, Tuesday, January 19, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., O. P. Owens Agriculture Center - Register with NCDA Marketing Specialist Nick Lassiter at 919-733-7136. Refreshments will be provided.

Robeson County Area Beekeepers Association Monthly Meetings, Tuesday, January 19 (third Tuesday of each month), 6:30 p.m. for the meal or 7:00 p.m. for the educational program. O. P. Owens Agriculture Center - Contact Person – Kerrie Roach

Pecan Management from A to Z, Monday, February 8, 6 – 8 p.m., O. P. Owens Agriculture Center – See article in this newsletter for complete details. Contact Person – Kerrie Roach

10-Hour Initial Waste Management Certification Class, Wednesday - Thursday, January 27 – 28, 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Extension Center in Bladen County - A class for operators of animal waste management systems will be offered for individuals needing certification. A fee of $5 for the class or $30 for the class and a manual will be charged and lunch is on your own. Call 671-3276 to register. Contact Person – Michelle Shooter

Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Training, February 2 – May 18, 6– 9 p.m., O. P. Owens Agriculture Center – Class size is limited. For more information call 671-3276. Contact Person - Kerrie Roach

N.C. Pork Conference, Thursday - Friday, February 4 – 5, Raleigh, N.C., – Contact Person - Eric van Heugten at 919-513-1116 or by E-mail at Eric_vanHeugten@ncsu.edu

Tri-County Corn Production Meeting, Tuesday, February 9, 10 a.m., O. P. Owens Agriculture Center – Dr. Ron Heiniger, Extension Corn Specialist, will be with us again this year to provide a comprehensive update about corn production. Dr. Randy Weiz, Extension Small Grain Specialist, will also provide some last-minute pointers about how to maximize your small grain yields. Representatives from the newly constructed ethanol plant in Raeford will provide an overview of their operation and will discuss their process of buying corn from local producers. A sponsored meal will be provided. Call 671-3276 to register. Contact Person – Everett Davis

Pesticide Exam, Wednesday, February 17, 1 p.m., O. P. Owens Agriculture Center – Contact NCDA&CS to register at 919-733-3556.

Agritourism Network Association State Convention, Thursday – Friday, February 18 – 19, Greenville, N.C. – See article in this newsletter for complete details. Contact Person – Everett Davis


Tri-County Soybean Meeting, Monday, February 22, 6 p.m., O. P. Owens Agriculture Center – See article in this newsletter for complete details. Contact Person – Everett Davis

CEFS Beef Workshop, Wednesday, March 3, 1 – 5 p.m., Center for Environmental Farming Systems, Goldsboro, N.C. - Cattle handling and forage management. Contact Person – April Shaefller at 919-515-4005 or by E-mail at April_Shaefller@ncsu.edu

7th N. C. Minority Farmers and Landowners Conference, Friday – Saturday, March 5 – 6, North Raleigh Hilton, 3415 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh - Call Ada Beatty, registration chairperson, at 910-874-3244 for more information.

Forestry Issues, Using Forestry Data, and Modeling, Wednesday, March 10, 9 a.m. – 12 noon, UNC – Pembroke – Contact Person – Everett Davis

2010 N.C. Small Farms Week, Monday – Saturday, March 22 – 27 - North Carolina A&T Cooperative Extension will coordinate various programs throughout the state honoring North Carolina’s small farmers. Extension programs that benefit small-scale agriculture will also be recognized during the period. Look for more details later. Contact Person - Nelson Brownlee
## 2010 Upcoming Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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Check out the endless amount of information you can find on our web site at: [http://robeson.ces.ncsu.edu](http://robeson.ces.ncsu.edu).
Do You Want Information Fast?

Do you have a computer? Do you have access to the Internet? Do you use E-mail? If not, you are missing out on one of the best ways possible to get any kind of information you need whenever you need it. As you can imagine, more and more people are using computers. Some are using them for record keeping and other special tasks. But the vast majority is using them for communications and information.

The Extension staff maintains web pages with a wealth of information with just about any topic you can imagine. We urge you to visit http://robeson.ces.ncsu.edu. Bookmark this web address, so you can get to it quickly.

In addition, we maintain quite a few E-mail groups that receive regular information from us over their computers. This is especially important when we can quickly send out urgent updates about things such as diseases, disasters, financial assistance opportunities, and meetings. You might have to wait several days to get this same information in the mail, or you might not get it at all. Provide your E-mail address to your favorite agent(s). They will not share it with anyone else without your permission.

Mailing Lists Update Forms

Since we are a government agency, we are required by law to update our mailing lists each year. This ensures that postage money is not used for mailings that are not wanted as well as ensures that citizens receive services they desire. PLEASE FILL OUT AND RETURN THE ENCLOSED FORM BY MARCH 1 INDICATING WHICH TYPE OF MAILINGS YOU WISH TO RECEIVE. If you have filled out one of these forms within the last two months, you do not need to fill out another one. Contact Everett Davis for more information.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
NORTH CAROLINA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION, ROBESON COUNTY CENTER
P. O. BOX 2280, LUMBERTON, NC  28359-2280; FAX 910-671-6278

We maintain a number of mailing lists, so we can provide up-to-date information to the public. If you would like to receive information about any of the topics listed below, please check the following mailing list(s). Each year we are required by law to update our lists. If you are already on our mailing list, please complete and return this form to the address above or you will be removed from our mailing list(s). Due to the Freedom of Information Act, our mailing lists are public information.

_____ Aquaculture
_____ Agricultural Crops (Corn, Soybeans, Cotton, Tobacco, and Wheat)
_____ Livestock (Beef, Swine, Horses, Goats, and Forages)
_____ Poultry (Broilers, Layers, Turkeys, and Backyard Poultry)
_____ Management and Marketing

_____ Beekeeping
_____ Commercial Horticulture (Fruit, Nuts, Vegetables, and Berries)
_____ Consumer Horticulture (Lawn, Home Garden, and Ornamental Plants)
_____ Forestry

PLEASE PRINT

Name______________________________________________
Company____________________________________________
Address____________________________________________
City______________________________________________
State__________ Zip________________________
E-Mail Address________________________________________

Home Phone Number________________________
Work Phone Number________________________
Cell Phone Number________________________
Signature_____________________________________

You may mail this form to P. O. Box 2280, Lumberton, NC  28359, or bring it with you when you visit our office.