

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

General Information

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Mission

To help citizens put research-based knowledge to work for economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and an improved quality of life through an educational partnership.

Summary

Cooperative Extension is the educational outreach of NC State University and A&T State University. County staff members are field faculty of these two universities. Volunteer advisory committees assist in the total program planning process, marketing, and resource development. Cooperative Extension trains, develops, and manages volunteers for program expansion and outreach. Collaborative efforts with other agencies and organizations further extend educational programs throughout the county. Cooperative Extension focuses educational information around five program areas: Agricultural Profitability and Sustainability, Urban and Community Agriculture, Conservation and Environmental Sustainability, Health, Nutrition, and Wellness, Youth Development, and Volunteerism. Cooperative Extension programs are open to any citizen in Randolph County for minimal or no fee. Ten full-time positions are located in the Randolph office with four area agents having educational responsibilities in Randolph.

Overview

Cooperative Extension has been in existence since 1914. Its programs still do what they've done since they began: provide solutions to the problems people encounter on their farms, in their homes, and in their communities. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created a cooperative system through which land-grant college administrators could join with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to conduct demonstration work. It was the act that formally established what was then called the N.C. Agricultural Extension Service. Since its inception, county boards of commissioners have provided support to ensure that their citizenry benefit from Cooperative Extension educational services.

Cooperative Extension, originally known as Agricultural Cooperation, is an outgrowth of land-grant institutions. Land-grant institutions have beginnings in the Morrill Act of 1862. Governments granted to states the land to establish institutions of higher education, specifically institutions that teach agriculture and the mechanical arts. The traditional land-grant mission focuses on three areas: teaching, research and extension. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and Guam have at least one land-grant university with the three-part mission. North Carolina's 1862 land-grant institution is North Carolina State University.

Seventeen southeastern states are unique in that they are home to two land-grant institutions. The 1890 institutions, named for the year legislation creating them was enacted, are

historically black. North Carolina A&T University and other 1890 land-grant institutions were created by the Second Morrill Act, which expanded the system of land-grant universities to include a historically black institution in those states where segregation denied minorities access to the land-grant institutions created in 1862.

North Carolina Cooperative Extension has a Congressional mandate to focus its educational programs and outreach on individuals and families without regard to race, religion, age, creed, sexual preference, and national origin. Cooperative Extension educational programs focus on five major areas: sustaining agriculture and forestry, protecting the environment, maintaining viable communities, developing responsible youth, and developing strong, healthy and safe families. Extension specialists on campus provide training and technical assistance to Extension agents and paraprofessionals working in counties across North Carolina. County personnel utilize a variety of teaching methods with families and individuals in the various programs. In furtherance of their outreach efforts, Randolph County Cooperative Extension produces monthly newsletter that addresses all five major areas. All are posted on-line at <http://randolph.ces.ncsu.edu>.

In 1991 the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service, along with similar agencies in other states, changed its name to Cooperative Extension Service. The new name was recommended nationwide to provide a contemporary description of who Extension is and what they do. The news release for the name changes stated that, "We cooperate between the state's two land-grant universities, within Extension, with our clientele, with our funding partners (county, state and federal governments), and with an increasing number of groups and agencies with whom we have established productive linkages."

Cooperative Extension personnel working in the counties are employees of the State. Agents are given university appointments and, upon acceptance by the Board of County Commissioners, are designated as county faculty members with professional rank of either N.C. State University or A&T State University. The County Director has an at-will appointment; all other agents typically have term appointments. Agents are expected have a Masters degree or to begin work on their Masters degree after one year of work experience with Extension and to be active members of their professional associations. Agents are required every five years to take a graduate course (or equivalent) that is approved by their appointing university. They are also required to attend in-service classes through the university on a regular basis.

The State and the counties jointly share in paying salaries and benefits of Extension employees. Employees in Randolph County include a Director with livestock responsibilities, Field Crops Agent, Small Ruminant/Equine Agent, Horticulture Agent, Family and Consumer Science Agent, 4-H Agent, 4-H program assistant, an Administrative Support Specialist, a Support Specialist, a Secretary/Receptionist, and part-time program staff. Four Area Agent positions serving Randolph County cover the areas of dairy, poultry, nursery and greenhouse, and commercial fruits and vegetables, and are funded fully by NCSU.

Memorandum of Understanding

To assure that education programs offered by Cooperative Extension at both land-grant institutions meet the needs of local clientele, it is important that both elected and appointed officials of the State and County understand their respective responsibilities and relationships in the conduct of this work. Therefore, the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service and each County Board of Commissioners sign a memorandum of understanding that details these responsibilities and relationships. The following is a partial listing of what the current agreement provides:

The N.C. Cooperative Extension Service will

- Determine qualifications for employment, take applications, screen and interview applicants, and recommend to County Commissioners appointment to vacant or new Extension positions;
- Recommend salaries of agents, paraprofessionals, and secretaries and determine jointly with County Commissioners the share of salaries to be paid by the State and County;
- Annually review county programs and each worker's performance;
- Provide training programs for agents and other Extension workers as needed to maintain effective program delivery;
- Develop and maintain a County Advisory Leadership System to assure that Extension programs are based on the needs of people in their respective county.

The Randolph County Board of Commissioners will

- Provide the County's share of salaries and benefits for Extension personnel;
- Provide offices, equipment, utilities, telephones, office supplies, and other items needed for efficient operation of Extension programs;
- Review and consider the annual budget request from the Cooperative Extension Service and take appropriate action by July 1 of each fiscal year;
- Confer and advise with the District and County Extension Directors relative to County Extension programs.

The Extension Service and County mutually agree

- To jointly work out all County Extension appointments and separations;
- That Extension Agents will not be classified under the County classification system;
- That Extension Agents will follow County policies relative to office hours and holidays.

Needs Assessment/Program of Work

North Carolina Cooperative Extension delivers educational information aimed at helping people use knowledge for improved economic health, for a clean, sound environment, and for strong, safe, and healthy families. In order to remain relevant in meeting the current and emerging needs of Randolph County citizens, Cooperative Extension conducts a semi-annual needs assessment, called an environmental scan. The process included scanning area newspapers and journals, reviewing census and demographic data, administering written surveys, conducting focus groups and advisory committee meetings, reviewing data from other agencies and organizations, and analyzing trends. With feedback from advisory groups, citizen needs were prioritized into focus areas for the Cooperative Extension educational program of work.

Major issues identified for continuous priority are farm land/green space preservation, agricultural profitability, health, nutrition and wellness, Families at Risk including youth programming, and Life cycle issues.

Advisory Leadership System

The Extension team works hand in hand with the following advisory councils, which are composed of influential and knowledgeable volunteers across North Carolina who give personal time and other resources to serve Cooperative Extension. In Randolph County, the following advisory councils/committees work with Extension staff: Cooperative Extension Advisory Council, Agricultural Advisory Board, Beef Specialized Committee, Randolph County Livestock and Poultry Improvement Board, 4-H/Family & Consumer Sciences Advisory Board, the Extension Community Association, Horticulture/Forestry Advisory Committee, Randolph County Master Gardeners, 4-H Volunteer Leaders Association, 4-H Youth Council, a Water Quality and Education Task Force, and the Voluntary Agricultural District Board.

Service Area: Program Management

Mission

To provide support and coordination services to the Cooperative Extension-Randolph County Center professional and volunteer team, in delivering research-based, quality educational information utilizing effective customer service principles.

Summary

The County Extension Director is responsible for program management. Program management includes, but is not limited to; community needs assessment, quality assurance and customer service, budget preparation and maintenance, public relations and marketing, facilities management, personnel supervision, long-range and annual planning, and volunteer involvement. The County Extension Director position provides program management in addition to having educational subject matter responsibilities. Ten team members are located in the Randolph office, with four area agents covering Randolph. At various times during the year, a number of part-time and volunteer staff work with the Cooperative Extension team. This service area has 2.60 allocated positions assigned to it, which includes support staff positions.

Operations

The County Extension Director is responsible for general oversight of the Cooperative Extension Department, program management, and the delivery of assigned educational subject matter.

Community Needs Assessment

Every two to five years, the Director, with assistance from the Extension team, gathers and analyzes a variety of data to determine customer needs, gaps in service, emerging trends, etc., which forms the basis for Extension short- and long-range program planning. They survey their advisory boards, program participants, newsletter subscribers, and others. They look at census and demographic information, industry and workforce information, and information from the Economic Development Corporation, chambers of commerce, childcare centers, Health Department, Planning & Zoning, etc.

Quality Assurance/Customer Service/Public Relations

Throughout the year, the Director visits program sites and evaluates program delivery of Extension team members, gathers feedback about team from customers, reads news articles written, and generally observes team members interactions with the public. Extension periodically includes customer satisfaction surveys with programs and always attempts to get verbal and written feedback from participants.

Budget Preparation and Maintenance

The Director prepares the annual budget and also approves and provides oversight of all grant funds, fee collection, and donations. The Director also oversees all travel allocations from the State.

Personnel Supervision

The Director reviews applications for agent positions, and jointly with the District Director, selects qualified applicants. The Director independently hires all support staff and program assistants. The Director helps develop and approves each employee's annual plan of work, reviews each plan at mid-year, and does a final appraisal at (calendar) year end.

Volunteer Involvement

Cooperative Extension relies heavily on volunteers. These volunteers serve in a variety of capacities: advisory councils, 4-H leaders, instructors, chaperones, sponsors, resource developers, advocates, clerical help, Master Gardeners, Extension and Community Association, and many more.

The Cooperative Extension Advisory Council works with the entire department; in addition, there are area-specific advisory councils/committees working with various Agents and program areas. The Director coordinates efforts to find qualified members for the Cooperative Extension Advisory Council and ensures that there is geographic and diversity representation.

Voluntary Agricultural District Program

The Director serves as advisor to the Voluntary Agricultural District Board. This Board oversees the Voluntary and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District Programs. The purpose of this program is to promote agricultural and environmental values and the general welfare of Randolph County by increasing identity and pride in the agricultural community and its way of life, to encourage the economic health of agriculture, and to increase protection from non-farm development and other negative impacts on properly managed farms. Landowners qualify for inclusions as/in a Voluntary Agricultural District if the farm property is participating in the Randolph County farm present use value taxation program or meets program qualifications in G.S. 105-277.3 (minimum amount of land required): 5 acres for horticulture use, 10 acres for general agriculture use, or 20 acres for forestry use. The property must have a conservation and/or forest management plan certified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service or NC Forest Service. This program prohibits non-farm use or development of land for 10 years and allows the creation of a maximum of three lots within a 10-year period. The property owner may at any time voluntarily revoke agreement by submitting a written notice to the Agricultural Advisory Board.

Community Development

The Cooperative Extension Team is very active in the life of the community, serving on various committees and having membership in different organizations. Partnering with many local businesses and organizations allows Cooperative Extension to maximize the reach of educational activities provided to Randolph County Citizens.

Service Area: Agricultural/Natural Resources & Community Resource Development

Mission

To provide agricultural producers, agri-businesses, related organizations, and individuals, educational information to improve economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and quality of life.

Summary

The Extension Agriculture and Horticulture Team teaches citizens, utilizing practical application of research, about existing or improved practices, technologies, and environmental stewardship, that will improve the economic stability or improve the operation of their farm, nursery, or forest. Educational information is distributed through a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, workshops, mass media, publications, newsletters, web sites, and on-site demonstrations. Technical assistance is provided on marketing, production, land use, alternative agriculture, and environmental issues. This service area has 3.40 allocated positions.

Overview

Agricultural Extension Agents have been helping people in their communities since 1914, when land-grant college administrators joined with the USDA to engage in extension work to make farms more productive and improve rural life. Over the years the role of these agents has changed and expanded, reflecting techniques and knowledge gained through research at the land-grant universities.

All agents must have a Bachelor's degree with an agriculture-related concentration or agricultural education. A Master's degree is preferred. All agents are expected to successfully complete at least three hours graduate credit (or equivalent) every five years.

Randolph County currently has four full-time agricultural agents (one County Director with livestock responsibilities, one Field Crops Agent, one Horticulture/Forestry Agent, and one Small Ruminant/Equine Agent), as well as four area agents (housed in other counties, one with poultry responsibility, one with dairy responsibility, one with commercial fruit and vegetable responsibility, and one with nursery and greenhouse responsibility).

Agents conduct programming and meetings for field crops growers (small grain, corn, soybean, tobacco), and livestock producers (chickens, beef, goats, pigs, sheep etc.) that help them to implement recommended and potential production practices and systems, investigate innovative agricultural opportunities, develop business and human resource plans, and explore marketing options to ensure continued farm productivity and profits and quality of life. They work with youth involved in animal projects to help them improve their skills in record keeping, finances, producing high quality animal products, sportsmanship, and appropriate treatment of animals.

The horticulture agent works with consumers and commercial horticulture growers to increase their knowledge and adopt practices concerning proper plant selection and pest management strategies that maximize plant performance while protecting the environment. In addition, the Horticulture agent is the local foods coordinator. They work to promote local

Farmer's Markets and support them by providing grower certifications. The agent oversees the garden, and work taking place in the garden. Master Gardeners, highly trained volunteers, provide support and much of the labor for the garden. The demonstration garden is a long-range project and is developing at a planned rate.

Operations

Agents work with advisory committees made up of clients to help the Extension Team with decision-making and programming. All agents help in the oversight of the Agricultural Advisory Program Committee. The livestock agent also works with the Beef Advisory Specialized Committee and serves as advisor to the Randolph County Livestock and Poultry Improvement Association. The horticulture agent also works with the Horticulture and Forestry Specialized Committee. The dairy agent, and poultry agent work with the Dairy Advisory Council, and Poultry Advisory Council, respectively, which are all area councils.

Advisory councils help agents develop their plan of work for the year. Programs offered may change from year to year.

The Livestock and Field Crops Agents are responsible for working with producers to teach best management practices. Much work is done with individuals on the farm to make changes in their farming operations that are more economical and will provide greater yields. In addition, advice is offered on how to fertilize, and control diseases field crops. Training and advice is offered to livestock producers on herd improvement, keeping animals healthy, genetics, selection, nutrition and management.

Two of the programs offered are mandated by the State:

- The Certified Animal Waste Applicator designation is required by the N.C. Division of Water Quality (DWQ) for operators of liquid animal waste management systems that serve over 250 swine, 100 confined cattle, 75 horses, 1000 sheep, or 30,000 poultry. This certification involves 12 hours of initial training. The course content is a standardized program provided by DWQ. Applicators must then obtain six hours of continuing education credit every 3 years. Cooperative Extension offers several continuing education classes for this group. The Agricultural Agents must apply to DWQ for approval of the continuing education classes they plan to offer. DWQ assigns the number of credit hours allowed for each particular class offered. Agents across the state may share programs they have developed. There are some state and national programs already pre-approved. The University also offers some continuing education classes on campus.

Individuals spreading dry litter do not have to have a certified plan, but they are required to utilize a management plan and keep records and conduct soil and waste sampling.

- The Certified Pesticide Certification and Licensing Program is required by the N.C. Department of Agriculture (NCDA). Cooperative Extension trains pesticide applicators in pesticide best management practices to protect worker health, crop safety, beneficial insect populations, and other environmental issues. Private applicators account for about 90% of the participants. They must show their certification in order to purchase

restricted herbicides. Commercial applicators (landscapers, lawn care services, farmer offering this service for hire, etc.) must be certified to apply pesticides. Dealers who sell pesticides must have a dealer's license.

Private applicators must have four hours of continuing education credit every three years, two of which must be pesticide safety. Classes and teaching methods must be approved by NCDA.

Programs and classes are offered at night and on weekends to accommodate clients' schedules. During the winter, when farmers are not as busy, some classes may be offered during the day.

It is important to note that Cooperative Extension Agents are an educational arm of NC State University, not regulatory. They provide the basic understanding needed to operate and maintain these systems in an efficient and environmentally sound manner. It is not their role to provide all the technical details for the complete design of an animal waste management system or an approved animal waste management plan. Agents work with local Soil and Water and NRCS agencies to provide waste management recommendations.

In order to keep clients and the general public abreast of class offerings and other information, Extension agents send out mailings to their various client lists, put flyers out in feed stores and other locations, make announcements on the radio, and publish information in local newspapers and Extension's newsletter.

In addition to the various class offerings, agents make site visits to farms and businesses on request. They may also set up demonstrations on a volunteer's farm.

All Cooperative Extension service areas have a youth component. The Agricultural agent works with youth who have a live project (dairy calf, etc.). Agents teach youth proper care of their animals and how to keep good records and manage project finances. They also participate in the annual Environmental Field Days at local Elementary Schools. They cover such topics as how animals affect the environment; how animals are good for the environment, erosion, soil types, plants, and composting.

Horticulture/Forestry Program

The Horticulture/Forestry Agent's scope of work includes the following:

- Identifying individual commodity groups in commercial horticulture so programming can be developed for their specialized needs. These groups include nurseries, greenhouses, farmers (with crops of tomatoes, strawberries, pumpkins, etc.), and turf growers. The Agent offers workshops to improve production practices, including water conservation, pollution control, business plans, and marketing strategies. He engages in a great deal of one-on-one contacts (about 80% phone calls and walk-ins and 20% site visits).
- Promoting consumer horticulture knowledge through programs on alternative crops, proper plant selections and placement, pest management, and crop diversification.
- Training interested individuals to become Master Gardener volunteers. Master Gardeners must volunteer 40 hours the first year they receive this designation and 20 hours per year

thereafter to maintain their Master Gardener designation. This group has its own Board of Directors.

- Serves as local foods coordinator, promoting farmers markets and locally grown produce.
- Provides grower certification for local markets.
- Increasing youth gardening interest and skills by providing programs to schools and 4-H clubs in the areas of plants, insects, and the environment.
- Evaluating programs and communicating those results to participants.
- Identifying grants and any other outside funding source to enhance programming.

Service Area: Family and Consumer Sciences

Mission

The mission of the Family and Consumer Science Program is to provide individuals, families, and communities with issue-driven education to foster informed decision-making about human and environmental concerns in a changing world.

Summary

The Family and Consumer Science team, which includes one Extension Agent and over 60 trained volunteers, teaches people how to make informed decisions about home, family, and consumer issues affecting their lives. Educational programs focus on food safety, nutrition and health, local foods, food preservation, and community/school gardens. Teaching youth and adults about how their food is produced allows citizens to make informed decisions that affect their family's health and well-being. Programming efforts and educational delivery methods have evolved with changing needs and issues of the times. There is one allocated position in this service area.

Overview

Family and Consumer Science originated as Home Economics. Early home economics work in North Carolina began with Girls' Canning Clubs. Back in 1912, with the help of a home demonstration agent, 14-year-old Margaret Brown and her sister joined a club in Mecklenburg County. "The purpose of the Girls' Canning Clubs is to give farm girls an opportunity to make some money," Margaret said. "I enrolled as a member just because I thought it would do me good in some way." Did it ever. The sisters' efforts yielded \$223.50 in profit from sales of lettuce, fresh and canned tomatoes, ketchup and pickles. Rewards for Margaret continued through her college days, when she persuaded a college president to buy her canned goods to help pay for her tuition.

Given the success, the clubs became as attractive to adults as they were to young girls. According to pioneer extension worker Jane S. McKimmon, "By 1916 women had taken the bit in their teeth and were running away with the organization. They were hungry for the new experience of learning to do things through seeing them done; for the opportunity of coming together in interesting work; for the chance to produce an income which would furnish them with things they had so long desired; and for an outlet through which they could express themselves and get recognition from others for what they had done."

These early home demonstration efforts led to the creation of Home Demonstration clubs (with the help of Extension staff), which later became known as Extension Homemakers organizations. Throughout their history, these groups have been devoted to helping their members and others improve the quality of their lives. Their commitment to volunteerism has evidenced itself in efforts to establish victory gardens in wartime and community clinics in times of epidemics. Homemakers clubs also have set up community bookmobiles and libraries and sponsored extensive literacy programs. Today these clubs are known as ECA (Extension and Community Association) clubs. Their efforts continue today through projects such as the Empty Bowl benefit and the ECA Candy Kitchen.

As families have grown more complex, so has Extension's approach to family and consumer issues. Today the focus is on preventive education programs for families in both rural and urban areas. These programs help families and consumers better understand health-care

costs, healthy eating, physical activity, and chronic disease and risk reduction. Food quality and safety programs give food-service personnel, dietary managers, community volunteers, and caregivers the knowledge and resources they need for safe food preparation.

Educational efforts are enhanced through networking and partnerships with local and state agencies and organizations. The efforts are multiplied by volunteers throughout the state and by paraprofessionals in an innovative food and nutrition program for limited-resource families.

Operations

Family and Consumer Science (FCS) offer programs on a variety of topics throughout the year to a variety of audiences. Currently, the areas of focus center around healthy living, physical activity and chronic disease risk reduction, nutrition, family resource management skills and volunteerism and leadership development. Program offerings can vary year to year. Most are offered at no cost but series programs often have a fee to cover program supply cost. Current programs offered include the following.

- Color Me Healthy – This program is designed to reach limited-resource children ages four and five. It provides fun, innovative, interactive learning opportunities on physical activity and healthy eating and includes educational parent newsletters. Classes are provided for Pre-K and Kindergarten classes at schools with 50% or higher free and reduced lunch.
- Safe Plates is a food safety managers certification course that is offered by Extension that meets the requirements for restaurants and food establishments as required by the food code.
- A variety of educational program are available to the public upon request on subjects like food labeling, MyPlate Food guide, portion distortion, canning, freezing, food safety, using herbs, reducing salt etc.
- SNAP or Steps to Health reaches 3rd graders in schools with 50% or higher free and reduced lunch. Nine forty-five minute sessions on nutrition are taught. Taste tests are provided at each class.
- SNAP nutrition education programs offered in the community for older adults are Better Choices and Eat Smart, Move More, Take Control, which are aimed at reducing the risk of chronic diseases. The Better Food, Better Health Program is an adult SNAP nutrition program offered for Latino families. The course is taught in Spanish.

FCS agent serves as liaison between the State and the Extension and Community Association (ECA). This organization was originally called Home Demonstration and was later known as Extension Homemakers before being changed to ECA. Randolph County has five ECA clubs, totaling about 55 members. The clubs meet monthly and then come together two or three times per year for educational programs at Cooperative Extension. They elect a County Council. Four times a year the County Council and all club officers meet to plan activities and projects. ECA clubs also participate at the district and state level.

Service Area: 4H Youth Development

Mission

To assist youth and adults in becoming competent, coping and contributing members of a global society, while developing essential “life skills” through planned “learning by doing” experiences.

Summary

4-H is a publicly and privately supported program utilizing community and University resources to help youth, adults, and families reach their full potential.

Youth and adults 1) work together in family and community environments creating real-life learning laboratories that help youth practice skills needed today, as well as in the future; 2) experience unique “hands-on” learning opportunities suited to their needs in their own neighborhoods and communities; 3) address current youth issues through positive prevention programs; 4) are involved in significant decision-making and participation in community roles; and 5) experience positive adult/youth mentor relationships.

To accomplish the 4-H mission, staff and trained volunteers believe in life-long learning, research-based education and diversity. There are 3.00 allocated positions for this service area.

Overview

4-H is an informal education program for young people ages 5-19, supported through the cooperation of federal, state and local governments. It is the largest out-of-school youth program in North Carolina and the United States.

Through a variety of learning experiences and project work, youth develop skills that will enable them to be competent, coping, caring, and contributing members of society. These young people are practicing life skills like decision making, problem solving, relating to others, planning and organization, record keeping, communication, leadership, dealing with change, and self-discipline.

The four H’s stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Members’ pledge:

“I pledge
My Head to clearer thinking,
My Heart to greater loyalty,
My Hands to larger service, and
My Health to better living,
For my club,
My community,
My country and my world.”

A green four-leaf clover with a white “H” on each cloverleaf is the 4-H emblem. The 4-H motto is “TO MAKE THE BEST BETTER.” The 4-H slogan is “Learn By Doing.”

Cooperative Extension conducts the 4-H program and is sanctioned by USDA. North Carolina State University, and Randolph County government provide funding to support the

program. Randolph County United Way, private donations, and user fees fund a large part of the County 4-H program as well. Individual 4-H clubs receive no direct funding from government sources, but raise their own money to support their activities and projects. Private donors and corporate supporters provide additional funds for specific project areas, youth recognition programs, volunteer development opportunities, and other programs in their communities.

Since its beginnings over 100 years ago, 4-H has grown to address the changing need and diverse backgrounds of today's youth.

- In the early 1900's 4-H programs began as a way to improve agricultural production by teaching children new methods and skills gained in the university. Boys and girls clubs were established with parents, volunteers, and extension agents providing leadership.
- During World War I, 4-H members contributed to the war effort through food production and conservation and canning demonstrations.
- During the late 1920's, 4-H crossed the Atlantic and became established in Europe. In 1927, the first National 4-H Club Camp was held in Washington D.C.
- By the 1930's, projects expanded from canning, corn growing and livestock to include clothing, home management and improvement, food and nutrition, soil conservation, home economics, tractor, engineering, electricity, and agricultural projects.
- During World War II, 4-H'ers contributed through victory gardens, scrap iron and aluminum drives, and purchase of war bonds.
- In 1948, Extension established the International Farm Youth Exchange, which is now known as International 4-H Youth Exchange.
- In 1959, the National 4-H Center opened in Chevy Chase, Maryland.
- During the 60's, Civil Rights legislation required expansion of audiences to include all minorities, and President Johnson's "War on Poverty" focused on designing programs for the disadvantaged poor. 4-H noted that it had been in the front lines all along, with about one-third of all 4-H members coming from such families.
- During the 70's, 4-H programs expanded to include economics; jobs and careers; animal, plants, and soil sciences; environmental and natural resources; health and safety; leadership; citizenship education and community development; creative and performing arts; leisure education and communications; mechanical sciences; and energy conservation and development.
- By the 1980's, 4-H was exploring new technologies of the Computer Age and had a major focus on the national Youth at Risk program. A national evaluation done in 1985 about the long-term impact of the 4-H program concluded that the powerful effects of 4-H expansion continue for decades.
- The 90's emphasized more opportunities for the involvement of youth in leadership roles and planning.
- In 2009, NC 4-H celebrated its centennial with inaugural NC Hall of Fame induction. Sig McCain was inducted from Randolph County.

Operations

Programs and Delivery Methods

The 4-H service area operates by "delivery method." A delivery method is the way 4-H reaches its target audiences. Most 4-H activities fall into one of the following delivery methods:

- *Community Clubs* – Randolph County Extension 4-H supports thirteen clubs. A 4-H club is a group of five or more young people, guided by an adult leader. Members elect officers and each member chooses one or more projects. Each club may explore a single subject or several subjects. They conduct business, work together on community service activities, meet new friends, and have fun. 4-H has no membership registration fee or required uniform. There may be minimal costs for project manuals and some 4-H activities or events. Some clubs have dues to help defray the costs of project materials and refreshments.

4-H members participate in a wide variety of activities. At the annual Youth Fair, project exhibits and project record books are judged. Exhibits may go to the State Fair. Record books are eligible for cash prizes. Educational Presentations, Favorite Food Show, and 4-H Entertains are other local events. Members may enter live projects (such as dairy calf) at the Randolph County Fall Festival or the district dairy show, and clubs may take teams to the State Dairy Quiz Bowl.

At the district and state level, members participate in District Activity Day, 4-H Teen Council, Teen Retreats, NC State 4-H Congress, and State Council Conferences.

On the national level, 4-H sponsors such opportunities as National 4-H Congress and National 4-H Conference.

- *School Enrichment* – Schools may contact 4-H staff, or vice-versa, to present school enrichment programs on a variety of subject matters. Programs like chick embryology allow the integration of science and the life cycle into lesson plans currently used in the school classroom. In addition, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) activities have been emphasized and environmental field day opportunities have been offered. A new program Farm to Table was added in 2012 to teach first and third graders where their food comes from and continues to date.
- *Special Interests* – Special interest programs are carried out through short-term learning opportunities (open to any youth), including day camps, field trips, and summer workshops.
- *4-H Camp* – North Carolina has five resident summer camps for youth located across the state: Eastern Camp in Tyrrell County, Camp Sertoma in Stokes County, Camp Millstone in Richmond County, Camp Swannanoa in Buncombe County, and Betsy-Jeff Penn Camp in Rockingham County. These camps are open to any youth ages 8-19.

The 4-H program is supported by the 4-H/FCS Advisory Board. This group of volunteers meets quarterly to provide leadership, assist with decision-making, and make recommendations concerning the overall 4-H program. Vacancies are filled with input from staff and other council members.

In addition to all their hands-on activities, 4-H team also submits articles for the Courier-Tribune and other newspapers. The 4-H Agent and 4-H Program Assistant rotate with other Cooperative Extension Agents in doing radio programs, providing information on various subjects and announcing upcoming events.

Outreach to Underserved Audiences

4-H seeks to provide outreach to underserved audiences. The 4-H program has worked with Randolph County Schools to provide 4-H opportunities during the summer and in the after-school hours at schools where 50% or higher of the youth is qualified for free and reduced lunch.

4-H provides programming twice a week for the entire summer to participants attending the YMCA summer program.

4-H is the recipient of a yearly United Way Grant. These dollars are used to purchase curriculum for projects, offset cost of camps and activities and provide scholarship assistance to youth who want to participate in 4-H activities.