



Alabama Cooperative Extension System
St. Clair County Office

Extension Newsletter

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Inside This Issue

**2012 Money Management Calendar
Now Available**

ACES Welcomes New Director

**Henry Dorough Elected National
Association Vice President**

Congratulations, Synthia & Derek

Give a Gift and Help a Bluebird

Thanks to Our Health Fair Sponsors

**“I Never Thought of Doing That”
Cooking Tips**

**November is National Diabetes
Month**

Watch That Holiday Gorging

**Easy to Make Holiday Dough
Decorations**

Recipe: Sassy Roast Pork

**The Gardening Corner: Harvesting
Herbs for the Holidays**

Agent Spotlight: Wendy Ulrich

Friend of 4-H Award: Phillip Phillips

Holiday Open House

National Farm-City Week

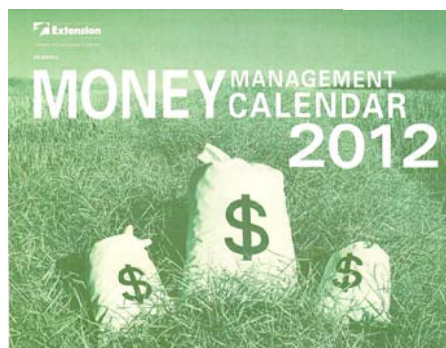
4-H Day at Auburn University

Dear Friends of Extension,

It's hard to believe that November is already here and the holidays are right around the corner! If your child is a 4-H club member be sure to tell them that November 19th is Homecoming and 4-H Day at Auburn University. 4-H'ers and volunteer leaders can receive a FREE ticket to attend. For more information please contact 4-H Agent Assistant, Chris Thomas. Also, on Wednesday, November 9th, the St. Clair County Farmers Federation Women's Committee will hold their annual Holiday Open House. Everyone is invited to attend the free event. There will be lots of great holiday food demonstrations, crafts, door prizes, and much more! And, this year 4-H has teamed up with the committee to conduct a canned food drive. If you have haven't attended before I assure you that you're in for a real treat! More details are on page 10. Hope to see you there!

As this year winds down, I would like to take this time to wish you and your family a season of joy and happiness! Thank you for reading the *Extension Newsletter* and for supporting the St. Clair County Extension office. Merry Christmas and best wishes for a healthy and happy 2012!

Lee Ann Clark



2012 Money Management Calendar Now Available

Good money management is a habit, an every-day task that is especially important if you need to stick to a plan to make ends meet. Over the years, thousands of people have utilized a money management calendar to help them manage their money better.

The *2012 Money Management Calendar*, published by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, is now available at the St. Clair County Extension office. One of Extension's most popular publications, the calendar is a resource that can improve budgeting skills for individuals and families.

The calendar provides a place to list fixed, occasional and flexible expenses for each month of the year. Using the calendar regularly not only can help consumers build better money management skills but also determine comfort levels with using a budget.

The calendar is also a great money management tool for family members out on their own, such as college students and young married couples. Stop by or call for your free copy.

Alabama Cooperative Extension System Welcomes New Director

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System welcomes its new director Dr. Gary Lemme. Dr. Lemme began his new job on Oct. 1 replacing retiring Extension Director Gaines Smith. Lemme became the third director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. The system was created in 1995 when Extension programs at Alabama A&M and Auburn universities were joined. ACES is the primary outreach organization for the two universities' land-grant mission providing real-life solutions and helping improve the lives of all Alabamians. The presidents of both universities say Lemme brings the type of leadership Extension requires as it continues to adapt to the changing needs and demands of its clients.

"Over the past decade, Extension in Alabama has undergone profound changes organizationally, structurally and programmatically. The changes under the leadership of the Extension director and the 1890 Extension administrator have paved the way for an organization uniquely situated to broaden its scope of outreach by integrating the total scope of the universities' programs of academics and research to meet the needs of Alabama citizens," says Dr. Andrew Hugine, president of Alabama A&M University. "Moreover, its influence nationally and internationally continues to open new vistas of service. The background and expertise of Dr. Lemme fit well with the future directions of ACES. We look forward to his courageous and strategic leadership."

Auburn University president Jay Gogue echoes Dr. Hugine's thoughts. "We are excited about Dr. Lemme's leadership in Extension and his role in providing Alabamians the services of their two land-grant institutions," Gogue says. "The role of Extension is ever changing and involves people and programs in both rural and urban areas. I believe he will take Extension to new heights while continuing the successful guidance provided by its former directors."

Lemme comes to Alabama Extension from South Dakota State University where he has been most recently a professor in the Department of Plant Science. A soil scientist by training, he is also the former dean of the College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences. He holds both bachelor's and master's degrees from South Dakota State. He completed his doctoral work at the University of Nebraska.

In addition to his tenure at South Dakota State University, Lemme has held a variety of leadership positions at several land-grant institutions including Michigan State University, the University of Minnesota and the University of Hawaii.

Lemme says he is excited to join the ACES family. "I look forward to working with the Extension professionals of ACES as we optimize Extension resources at both universities," he says. "The unique joint system of Alabama Extension is one reason I was attracted to the position. Two land-grant institu-

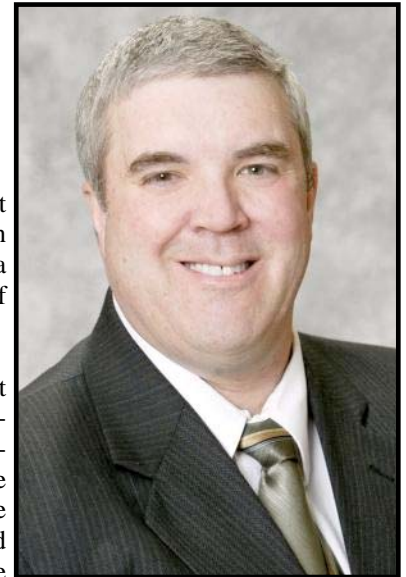
tions working in concert through Extension can provide citizens with a vast and diverse body of knowledge."

In particular, he notes that environmental stewardship, economic development and quality of life issues are areas where Extension can lead and make a difference in the lives of everyone in Alabama.

Retiring Extension Director Gaines Smith says he is confident that Extension professionals will have a strong new leader. "While I have thoroughly enjoyed my 45-year career, I can retire knowing that I am turning the reins over to a director who is committed to Extension's mission and goals," says Smith. "We will work closely for the next several weeks to ensure a smooth transition."

Dr. Virginia Caples, the 1890 Extension administrator, says she was attracted to Dr. Lemme's understanding and practical demonstration of shared leadership and governance. "The application of these two characteristics coupled with visionary and viable programs should keep ACES at the forefront of Extension leadership nationally and internally," says Caples. "I look forward to working with him in providing progressive and strategic leadership for ACES."

Auburn University began its Cooperative Extension Service in 1914 while Alabama A&M University's Extension program began in 1971.



**Daylight Saving Time Ends
November 6th—Don't Forget!**

Henry Dorough Elected National Association Vice President

Henry Dorough, regional Extension agent, was recently elected vice president of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) during NACAA's 96th Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference held in Overland Park, Kansas, August 7-11, 2011.

Dorough has served NACAA as secretary for the past three years and as a result of this election will serve the next year as vice president, followed by three additional years serving the association as president-elect, president and past president. He was one of over 1200 Cooperative Extension Service agricultural agents and their families who attended the week-long professional improvement program.

"NACAA delegates meet each year to consider business for the organization and to provide training for agents to help them conduct better educational programs," said Dorough. "We provide our members professional training and support. Agents honor their peers and



give special recognition to selected agents who have reached distinguished milestones in their careers."

In addition to Dorough's election, some of the program highlights included "educational presentations by peers, exhibits and displays to promote new educational programs, discussions on

current issues facing farming and agri-business, leadership development seminars, professional speakers and much more," Dorough said.

More than 20 tours to take delegates to agricultural points of interest were available. Exhibitors also provided sessions on innovative products and services of value to professional agricultural workers and their clients.

Dorough holds two degrees from Auburn University. He received his B.S. degree in Animal Science in 1987 and a Masters in Animal Nutrition in 1990. He currently serves as regional Extension agent, with specialties in animal science and forages. He is housed in St. Clair county and oversees programs in Calhoun, Chambers, Clay, Cleburne, Randolph, St. Clair, Talladega and Tallapoosa counties. He has one son, Matthew, and resides in Eastabogo.

Congratulations, Henry!



Give a Gift and Help a Bluebird

Bluebird houses are a special gift in my book. They provide nesting sites for my favorite bird and bring these birds close to the house so that I can enjoy their song and activity year round. I remember seeing my first bluebird nest. It was in a gourd in my grandfather's plum tree. This was about 1968 when bluebirds were pretty rare, so this was a special event.

Eastern bluebirds are much more plentiful now than they were in the sixties. Much of that has to do with folks like me who love this bird and make sure houses are up and nesting sites are available. If you receive a bluebird box, make sure it is up by the first of February. These birds will begin to pair off, and I have seen

nesting attempts as early as February 15th. After the first clutch of birds leave the nest, clean out the box and they will more than likely use it to raise a second family. After the last birds have flown the nest, sometime in June or early July, leave the nesting material in the house. It makes a good wintering site for the birds when it turns really cold and windy.

Clean out the boxes prior to February 1st so that new arrivals will consider nesting in the box. They are reluctant to nest in a box that has old nesting material in it but I have seen them do it on occasion. For more information about bluebirds, contact the St. Clair County Extension office. If you purchase a bluebird box for someone,



drop by the office and pick up publication ANR 687: *Eastern Bluebirds*. This will provide the information that you need to be successful in attracting birds to your bluebird box.

Source: Dan Porch, County Extension Coordinator, Blount County

Special Thanks to Our 2011 Health Fair Sponsors

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“I Never Thought of Doing That” Cooking Tips



Have you ever cooked pasta and the boiled over causing the flame to go out or heating element to smoke? Ever wondered what you could do to moisten your cake? Out of buttermilk and need something fast? Well, here are some cooking tips you may not have known to try.

- ◆ To prevent your pasta from boiling over, place a wooden spoon across the top of the boiler. This will separate the steam and keep your water from boiling over. Also, you can rub butter around the rim of the boiler.
- ◆ Want to add a little moisture to your cake batter, add 1/2 cup sour cream. You will not taste it and it adds excellent moisture to your cakes.
- ◆ Boiled eggs can peel easily if you add a lot of salt to the water before cooking.
- ◆ Instead of peeling and chopping small pearl onion, use frozen ones and add directly to dish.

- ◆ To remove skin from chicken, use a paper towel and pull it off. It instantly clings and adds for easy removal of the skin.
- ◆ Refrigerate cookie dough before cooking to prevent from spreading and thinning.
- ◆ Add about 1 cap full of vinegar to a gallon of water. Place raw fish in water and soak for 15 minutes. This will get rid of the fishy smell and taste.
- ◆ To clean your grill, spray with vinegar, let sit for 5 minutes, and wipe with a clean, wet towel or paper towel. No scrubbing and no chemicals.
- ◆ Use a plastic knife when cutting lettuce. A metal knife will turn lettuce brown.
- ◆ If you have onion breath, eat a piece of chocolate.
- ◆ Stand taco shells up on oven racks with open face down to heat. This will keep them from closing up and allows for more stuffing. Also it

heats faster and more evenly.

- ◆ Instead of using water in a cake mix recipe, add buttermilk. It will allow for the lightest, fluffiest cakes.

Some of these ideas were gathered from the community web exchange, WSFA. Others are personal tips. If you have questions about these tips or any others please contact Angela Treadaway, regional Extension agent, food safety, preparation, and preservation at the St. Clair County Extension office at (205) 338-9416 or email treadaw@aces.edu.

Source: Angela Treadaway, regional Extension agent

November is National Diabetes Month

November is American Diabetes Month. In the U.S., approximately 24 million Americans have diabetes, including almost 5.7 million people who haven't recognized the symptoms and don't realize that they have the disease.

Symptoms of non-regulated diabetes include increased thirst, frequent urination, unexplained weight loss, increased hunger and tingling of your hands or feet. The fasting plasma glucose test is the preferred method for diagnosing diabetes because it is easy, convenient and less expensive than other tests. During a blood glucose test, blood is drawn and sent to a lab for analysis. An eight-hour fast is required before taking the test. The standard diagnosis of diabetes is made when two separate blood tests show that your fasting blood glucose level is greater than or equal to 126 mg/dL.

Once you have been diagnosed with diabetes you should learn the proper use of any prescribed medication and the role that exercise and good nutrition have in keeping diabetes regulated. The hemoglobin A1c test, also called the glycated hemoglobin test or HbA1c, provides an average of your blood sugar control during a 6 to 12 week period and is used in conjunction with home blood glucose monitoring to make adjustments in your diabetes management regimen.

People without diabetes A1c is between 4 and 6 percent. The goal for people with diabetes is a less than 7 percent. The higher the hemoglobin A1c, the higher the risk of developing complications related to the disease. Individuals with diabetes should get their A1c checked at least twice a year.

Many people can manage this chronic

disease with exercise and healthy food choices,



while others need to use insulin products. Long-term impacts of uncontrolled diabetes include heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney failure, limb amputation and death. Education and lifestyle changes are key tools in diabetes management. Talk to your physician, nurse and dietician about problems and concerns. Ask questions until you understand what you need to do to live with this disease. For more information on diabetes visit: <http://cdc.gov/Features/Livingwithdiabetes/>

Source: Donna Shanklin, regional Extension agent—health

Watch That Holiday Gorging

Talk about a killjoy. One of the stories making its rounds in daily newspapers around the country and on the Internet is that gorging over the holidays may do more than make you feel bad. It even may increase the risk of heart attack by as much as four times within the two hours following consumption.

The finding is based on a study presented shortly before Thanksgiving last year at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2000. Bad things do follow overeating, the study found. For starters, blood clots more easily and quickly after the consumption of a big meal. Likewise, the fat levels in the blood increase along with blood pressure.

Actually, these findings aren't new. Medical researchers have known about them for a long time. But how serious is this threat? Probably not that serious for healthy people, even as old as age 50, with no serious heart disease risks. Granted, all that overeating might make you feel bad the rest of the day, but other than indigestion and sluggishness, you'll probably be okay.

But it's a different case for obese and sedentary people with heart problems or with a risk of heart disease. The blood clotting and elevated blood pressure that typically follows overeating could be just enough to push some of these people over the edge — reasons why it's important to take stock of these risks, especially when the allure of big meals is stronger than at any other time of year.

You still can enjoy the traditional Christmas day feasting, for example, but just make sure you go easy on the calories. Instead of pigging out and consuming thousands of calories, limit your intake to moderate, reasonable amounts of food. Also, consider following these safeguards:

First, eat slowly. It's no guarantee against overeating, but it can help slow down the number of calories you consume.

Second, back away from the table when you feel full and go do something else. If you can't get a certain food out of your mind even hours later, go back and consume a smaller portion of it.

Third, exercise. It even can be as simple as walking.

In fact, walking is arguably one of the most effective safeguards against holiday weight gain, largely because it often proves to be the most convenient form of exercise over the holidays.

Walking also is useful in getting you out of the house and away from food. But even more important, as an aerobic form of exercise, walking can counteract some of the physiological effects associated with overeating, such as quicker blood clotting.

Adequate intakes of vitamin E and omega 3 fatty acids readily available in fish also can safeguard against the quicker blood clogging associated with overindulgence. So can a daily dose of baby aspirin. But caution remains the most effective safeguard. If you're at risk of heart disease, you should shy away from the extra calories, no matter how tempting.

Source: Jennifer Dutton, regional Extension agent



Extension Office Holiday Closings

Thanksgiving: November 23rd—25th, 2011

and

Christmas: December 19th, 2011—January 2nd, 2012

*Merry Christmas from the
St. Clair County Extension Office Staff*

Easy to Make Holiday Dough Decorations

Dough ornaments make unique gifts and tree decorations. Dough creations are easy to make by using common household items such as flour, water, salt, white glue and shampoo.

Alabama Cooperative Extension System Nutritionist, Barbara Struempler, warns consumers that the ornaments are strictly for decoration. "Sometimes children see the finished ornaments and think that because they are called dough decorations they are edible. It is important that everyone understands that the decorations are not edible."

For all recipes, roll out dough on waxed paper until about one fourth inch thick. Use a nail or drinking straw to make a hole in the top of the ornaments. Ornaments can be made three-dimensional by forming small pieces of dough into various shapes and attaching them together before baking or air drying. Moisten each piece before attaching. Squeeze dough through garlic press to make hair, fur, etc.

If you want to tint dough, tint or paint ornaments with food coloring mixed with a little water before baking or air drying. Acrylic paints can be used after the ornaments are baked or dried.

To finish each ornament, paint it with a coat of clear varnish, polyurethane or clear nail polish. This coating will protect the dough from moisture. After Christmas, wrap each ornament with tissue paper and place in a zippered plastic bag and stack lightly in an appropriate-size box lined with tissue paper. Following this step will help protect the ornaments from

damage or bugs while in storage.

Following are the recipes for making dough ornaments:

Bread Dough

1 cup salt
2 cups flour
1 cup water
Food coloring (if desired)

Mix flour and salt in a bowl. Add water a little at a time. Knead dough 7 to 10 minutes until smooth and pliable. Tint after kneading if desired. Shape and bake ornaments at 325°F for 30 minutes or until hard.

Glue Dough

3/4 cup flour
1/4 cup white glue
1/4 cup shampoo

Mix and knead well. Shape desired ornaments. Let ornaments air dry.

Source: Dr. Barbara Struempler, Extension Nutritionist



Sassy Roast Pork



Cook an approximately 5 pound pork picnic roast in the oven or on a smoker grill for about 4 hours at 300°F or until very tender. When the roast is done, remove it from the oven, cool and slice. Place in large bowl and pour sauce (recipe below) over the meat. Toss lightly and serve with warm buns. Be sure to serve while the meat and buns are still warm. Good served with coleslaw and baked beans.

Sauce:

1 cup apple cider vinegar
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup white sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup ketchup
3 Tablespoons honey

Sprinkle of ground red pepper
3 Tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
2 teaspoons prepared yellow mustard
1 medium onion, chopped fine
2 large cloves of mashed garlic

Mix all ingredients in a saucepan and bring to a slow boil, until all the sugar is dissolved. Ingredients can be varied to suit your taste.

Source: Carol Simpson, 1st place winner, 2011 St. Clair County Farmers Federation Pork Cook-Off

The Gardening Corner



By: Wendy Ulrich, Lab Technician
C. Beaty Hanna Horticulture & Environmental Center

Harvesting Herbs for the Holidays

Question: I started my first herb garden this year and would love to include some of these herbs in the coming holidays. Any suggestions?

or freeze until right before it's time to set the table (the small individual butters soften quickly). Believe me, these will be a hit that will be remembered and earn you rave reviews.

Answer: I'm glad you had the joy of growing herbs in the garden this year and hope you also enjoyed experimenting with the wonderful flavors of cooking with fresh herbs. Some of my fond summer memories are of corn on the cob bathed in basil butter and vegetables grilled on rosemary stems sprinkled with fresh dill and thyme. If you didn't get a chance to try out some of these ideas it's still not too late to plan for some delicious, herbal, sensory delights during the upcoming holidays!

My favorite herbal butter recipe is for Orange Thyme Butter. It may sound complicated but it's really quite simple and you can't beat it for flavor.

Orange Thyme Butter

Before the first frost takes the basil (which doesn't preserve very well by drying) harvest the tender leaves and make some basil butter to put in the freezer to use on root vegetables and on fresh baked breads. Herbal butters flavored with basil or sage is easy to make and worth the time you put into them now. Just mix softened, room temperature butter with some chopped basil leaves (or herb of choice) and blend well. You can roll the butter into a log with plastic wrap and freeze to slice later or use a butter mold or tub to store in the freezer until needed. Sage butter is "to die for" on hot biscuits; or try some chive butter on mashed potatoes. Basil may also be frozen in ice cube trays with just enough water to hold the leaves together, then store the cubes in a zip lock bag to add to soups and sauces this winter.

¼ pound unsalted butter (softened to room temperature)
¾ teaspoon fresh grated fresh orange zest
¾ teaspoon fresh orange juice
¾ teaspoon chopped fresh thyme

Blend all ingredients together and place in tub or mold, or roll into log. Cover with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator overnight to combine flavors. Butter may also be kept in the freezer for a longer period of time.

Be sure to label and date your herbs when you store them in the freezer. These butters may also be used right away but benefit from aging to blend the flavors. When planning for the holidays these butters may also be created in decorative candy molds for festive individual butters at the table. Place enough butter in the molds and tap to be sure the butter fills all parts of the mold, place in the freezer until hard and unmold and place in a zip lock bag and refrigerate

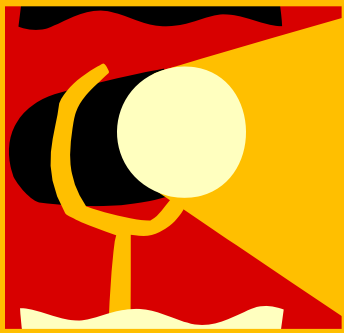
Amounts are to taste, I usually use closer to a tablespoon of each added ingredient to the butter.

This is a wonderful butter for Thanksgiving as the flavor compliments many of the traditional dishes served during this holiday. Herbal butter makes a wonderful "hostess gift" if you're not the one doing all the cooking for the holiday meal. To make it even better, gift it in a pretty dish or container.

Another great gift idea is herbal vinegars. And these are also a wonderful way to preserve the

continued on page 9 →

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.



Agent Spotlight



Wendy Ulrich

Lab Technician

C. Beaty Hanna Horticulture & Environmental Center



Wendy conducts a workshop on Herbs and Their Uses

Wendy Ulrich currently works as a lab technician at the C. Beaty Hanna Horticulture and Environmental Center at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. She has worked for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) for 13 years. Before coming to Extension she owned and operated a landscape design business.

Wendy is a native of Acton, Massachusetts and graduated from Acton-Boxborough Regional High School. She attended Athens State University where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Behavioral Science. She also earned a Master of Science degree in Human Environmental Sciences from the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. She and her husband, John Charles, live in Blountsville in Blount county. They have five children; Corey York, Laurie Chacon, Paula Price, Debbie Stapleton, and Dyana Goggins, all of Cullman. When not working, Wendy enjoys gardening, especially vegetables, herbs and flowers, quilting, cooking, beekeeping and crafts.

Wendy conducts programs on herbs and their uses, raised bed gardening and has taught several Master Gardener classes in St. Clair County. For more information about commercial horticulture, home grounds, gardens, and home pests please contact Wendy at (205) 338-9416 or email at ulricwg@aces.edu. She will be happy to assist you.

Gardening Corner continued

harvest. Steep herbs in vinegar just as you would make a fine cup of tea; bring some vinegar to almost boiling and pour over fresh herbs, cover and steep till the desired strength of flavor. Remove the herbs with a strainer, (for clearer vinegar pour through a coffee filter) and bottle in a pretty bottle with a plastic cap or cork. A great combination to try is rice vinegar and purple basil. This is light flavored and a pretty vinegar for fruits, vegetables, and salads. Experiment with different combinations of vinegars and herbs. Red wine vinegar and rosemary make a wonderful marinade for beef. These vinegars also make wonderful hostess gifts or are a great addition to a food basket.

Another great idea for the holidays is to garnish and decorate with fresh herbs. Turkey and ham are a treat for the eye when served up with a garnish of fresh herbs and they double duty as a seasoning to go with the meal. Try some sugared herbs along with sugared fruits as garnish or decoration, or you may even tuck some fresh herbs in with the folded napkins at each place setting.

These are just a few ideas for the holidays not only for happy tasting but also for gift giving. With the economy the way it is this year, gifts of food and homemade goodies are really going to be appreciated, so give the gift of love and you'll be a favorite on everyone's gift list this year.

*"If you want to be successful at being yourself,
you're going to have to take a chance on not being like everyone else."*

—Author: Unknown



Friend of 4-H Award

Mr. Phillip Phillips



St. Clair County 4-H is proud to announce Mr. Phillip Phillips as this issue's winner of the *Friend of 4-H Award* in recognition of his outstanding volunteer service. Phillip is the volunteer leader of the 4-H Stray Arrows Archery Club.

Pictured (l to r): Regional Extension agent, Nancy Graves, Phillip Phillips, and Phillip's son, Michael

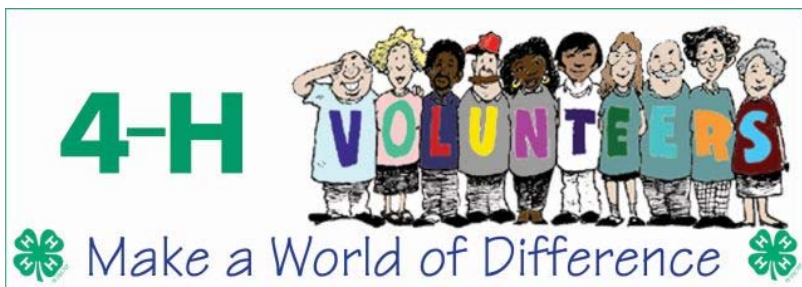
Phillip started volunteering in St. Clair County four years ago. He believes that 4-H is very important because it offers so much for kids to do. It teaches them skills they can use as they become adults. He enjoys volunteering for 4-H because he loves archery and wants to teach others how to become successful at the sport.

Phillip is originally from Odenville where he currently resides with his wife, Michelle and two children, Michael and Krissy. He attended St. Clair County High School in Odenville but was not a member of 4-H. When he's not volunteering, he enjoys hunting, fishing and college football.

Congratulations Phillip and thank you for the countless hours you have dedicated to St. Clair County 4-H! If you would like to be a 4-H volunteer or nominate someone for this award, please contact the St. Clair County Extension office at (205) 338-9416.



Phillip conducts 4-H Clover Classroom Archery Workshop in July at Ashville Middle School

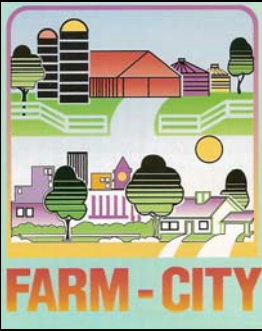


The St. Clair County Farmers Federation Women's Committee invites you to join them for their annual

Holiday Open House

To be held on Wednesday, November 9th at 10 a.m. at the ALFA Building, 32775 U S Hwy 231, Ashville, Alabama There Will Be Food demonstrations, Crafts, and Door Prizes! Free Admission! Everyone welcome! Lots of fun for everyone!

St. Clair County 4-H & the Women's Committee have teamed up for a Food Drive & asks that you please bring a non-perishable food item to this year's Open House.



National Farm City Week

November 18–24, 2011

As we prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving, we also gather to count our blessings and give thanks for the bounty available to us. Thanks to all those involved in getting the food from the farm to the table so that we can enjoy this abundance. During Farm-City Week think about farmers, ranchers, processors, truck drivers, retailers and others who work hard to supply your food, and say “thanks.”

Agriculture: A Growing Story

By: Victoria Booker

(Victoria, a 4-H'er and 8th grade student at Springville Middle school, won 2nd place in the state Farm-City essay contest in April. Here is her winning essay.)

Since the beginning of time, the city has depended on the farm for producing our food supply as well as other materials that the city manufactures and distributes to the public. Throughout history, the farm has played an important role in the economy. Nearly 13 percent of the world's commodities are produced in the United States. The United States produces one-fifth of the world's grain, milk, and eggs which makes agriculture our nation's number one industry. The farm has evolved over time from a couple of acre gardens that produced only enough food for their families to the bigger commercial farms that feed the nation today. The advances in technology, science, and in relationships have led to a thriving agricultural industry.

The advances in technology have taken us from plows and oxen to today's tractor. What would have taken a whole day to plow with oxen in the past, now only takes a few hours with a tractor. The many services a tractor provides are numerous. A tractor can plow fields fast, lift heavy loads in its bucket, and pull equipment behind it as well as helping with many other jobs around the farm. These technological advances have also made working around these machines safer as well. Major improvements have been made in irrigation. Irrigation, originally, was channels dug in rows through a field to bring water to crops. Irrigation now consists of water traveling through pipes that are suspended in the air that roll on wheels over the crops and sprinkle the life-giving water. This saves time and human labor.

Science has come a long way since Robert Hooke first looked at cells. The advances that have been achieved are phenomenal! Today, the average farmer produces enough food to nourish about 130 people per year. Scientists have genetically altered plants so that they yield a larger quantity of crops. They have also altered them so that the fruit or vegetable is as close to perfect as possible. This means that our produce tastes as good as it looks.

To keep bugs from destroying our almost perfect produce, we have developed pesticides. These advances in pesticides are both helpful and harmful. They are helpful because it deters insects from destroying fields of crops. The biggest down side is that the pesticides are potentially harmful for the environment. They can pollute the air as well as our groundwater. The food standards of today are extremely high. The processing and packaging procedures has to meet the inspections of the government to keep you and I, the consumers, safe and healthy.

Throughout history, the farm and city have gone hand-in-hand, like peanut butter and jelly. You cannot have one without the other. Approximately 22 million jobs are agriculturally related. This means the jobs may not be directly on the farm, but these jobs could be supplying farm equipment or in an educational environment about agriculture. The relationship between the farmer and businessman has become closer than ever before. Farmers markets involve both the urban and rural aspects of our communities. They provide good interactions between producer and consumer. The farmers markets give consumers the opportunity to have fresh and delicious produce while farmers gain direct access to the market without a middleman involved. Since the produce is grown locally, it doesn't have to travel very far. This saves fossil fuels and means that farmers can pick their crops at their peak of ripeness.

The advances in technology, science, and a better understanding of relationships have made agriculture flourish. Whether it is irrigation developments or farmer's markets, the farm is coming closer to the city and that relationship has opened many doors to opportunity. Who knows? We could be farming on the moon one day as agriculture continues to "grow."





4-H DAY @ AU

AU vs. Samford

Saturday, November 19, 2011 - Homecoming!

Kickoff: Early Afternoon (to be announced)

Jordan-Hare Stadium, Auburn University

4-HERS* & VOLUNTEER LEADERS* RECEIVE A FREE TICKET.

***MUST BE REGISTERED IN 4-H PLUS DATABASE.**

Family & friends can purchase tickets day of event in the same section for \$50 each (cash).

For more information, please contact Chris Thomas, 4-H Agent Assistant, at (205) 338-9416.



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