

UF/IFAS EXTENSION & ST. JOHNS COUNTY

WORKING TOGETHER

April, May, June 2019

The St. Johns County Board of Commissioners and UF/IFAS Extension work in a cooperative effort to provide relevant programming to citizens throughout the County. During the second quarter of 2019, Extension Agents and Staff recorded approximately **11,190 contacts** with clientele that included emails, phone calls, office visits and field calls. Agents conducted **90 on-site visits** (Agriculture, Horticulture, Schools, Livestock, and Forages) to assist residents one-on-one in St. Johns County. Below are a few examples of impacts reported by our Agents during this quarter.



- Our Commercial Agricultural Agent demonstrated how to **navigate a weather station and interpret soil moisture sensor graphs** to 12 commercial growers and field technicians at the Hastings Advisory Committee summer meeting.
- The **UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County Horticulture Department** partnered with **Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Department of Plant Industries (DPI)** to distribute biological control agents for the invasive Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) – the vector responsible for spreading citrus greening which has decimated Florida's citrus industry. We distributed 14 vials of *Tamarixia radiata* (wasps that are the parasitoid of ACP) to county residents.
- Senior St. Johns County 4-H member, Caeli Benyacko, placed **1st in the state 4-H Horticulture I.D. and Judging contest** in June. This project engages youth in the exploration of plant science by learning to identify specific characteristics and qualities of fruits/nuts, ornamentals, flowers/foilage and vegetables.
- In partnership with the St. Johns County Cattlemen's Association, our Production Agriculture Agent helped to **re-establish the St. Johns County Agriculture Hall of Fame**. The original 10 inductees of this group were recognized at the St. Johns County Ag Center Rededication Ceremony in 1998 by then Florida Commissioner of Agriculture, Dole Conner. A commemorative plaque honoring these inductees is being developed to hang in the St. Johns County Extension Office.
- St. Johns County 4-H awarded a total of **\$3,500 in scholarships** to three graduating high school seniors who excelled in the 4-H program. Applicants were required to submit a portfolio of their 4-H career and take part in an interview session. The St. Johns County 4-H college scholarship fund is primarily supported by private donors.
- Thirteen (13) middle school students and two teachers from **Polaris Charter Academy in Chicago** participated in an **intensive two-day microplastics program with our Sea Grant Agent**. Upon their return to Chicago, **these students served as ambassadors by teaching other seventh and eighth grade students** what they had learned in Florida. The teacher wrote, "The Ambassadors were so great! They used all the slides you sent and went through most of the experiences with the rest of their classmates. I am super excited to build out this expedition and hopefully repeat it with my next group of middle schoolers in 2020-21."
- After attending educational class taught by the UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, **315 students from 5 St Johns County elementary schools** learned about the **benefits of calcium**. Of these, 164 students increased their awareness of osteoporosis.
- Over 315 fourth graders and 75 teachers and volunteers attended the **St. Johns County Ag EdVenture Days** in April at the St. Johns County Fairgrounds. This **hands-on educational event** provided an assortment of agricultural learning stations. In addition to UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County, event sponsors were the Putnam St. Johns Farm Bureau, St. Johns County Cattlemen's Association, and the Donnie Heyman Scholarship Fund.



- Our Production Agriculture Agent provided **one-on-one consultation to a beef cattle rancher** who after learning basic beef management practices **incorporated animal identification** in his herd. Because of this one change he can now utilize records related to **herd health, nutrition and production** to empower him to make better management decisions.
- The county wide **4-H Tropicana Public Speaking Contest** was held on April 22nd at the St. Johns County Extension Office. This public speaking program which involved **over 5,200 fourth, fifth and sixth grade youth**, culminated with thirty-three school winning speeches.
- Thirty-seven (37) participants who attended workshops provided by our Family and Consumer Sciences Agent sampled salad green varieties and learned the benefits of each including **health benefits, nutritional differences and safe handling and storage**.
- Thirty-eight (38) growers, researchers and extension faculty attended the **HAEC Potato Field Day** with **tours provided by the Commercial Agricultural Agent**.
- **Our Sea Grant Agent partnered with Anastasia State Park and The Amp during "Earth Week" to hold** two screenings of the film, "The Smog of the Sea". The Amp provided funding to purchase fabric and beeswax pellets. All who attended the film and discussion sessions had the opportunity to make their own beeswax food wrap to take home with them. Beeswax wraps are reusable alternatives for plastic wrap.
- The UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County Horticulture Department provided **Green Industry Best Management Practices (GI-BMP) training** to green industry professionals which enables them to apply to FDACS to obtain their Limited Commercial Fertilizer Applicator Certificate, which is required by state statute to **legally apply pesticides** in the state of Florida.
- Our Commercial Agriculture Agent assisted the **Putnam/ St. Johns Farm Bureau Women's Committee on tours through Riverdale Potato Farm and Sauriwa Conservation Area** where participants gained knowledge related to local commercial agriculture and natural resources.
- Fifty-six (56) youth and their families took part in the potato harvest for the **Tri-County 4-H Potato Project** at the Hastings Agricultural Extension Center. As a result of this project, youth gained first-hand experience learning about the potato industry from **planting, harvesting and marketing of potatoes**.
- During the **Green Hands Festival** at The Amp, the winners of Dr. McGuire's **"Washed Up: A Marine Debris Art Contest"** were announced and presented with their prize packages. All entries consisted of artworks made from debris items collected along local shorelines.
- The St. Johns County Horticulture and Family and Consumer Sciences Departments teamed up to provide a 2 day summer camp for 4H Youth called **"Food is Fun"** (see blog: <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/stjohnsco/2019/05/31/fcs-and-horticulture-get-hands-dirty/>). The focus of the camp was to explore **local food systems**, including **food production, healthy nutrition**, and creative uses of **vegetables and herbs**. Youth were able to touch, smell and explore the herb and rose gardens that were recently renovated by our Master Gardener Volunteers.
- The St. Johns County 4-H Meats Judging Team, coached by Mrs. Wendy Smith and our Production Agriculture Agent, competed at the **2019 State 4-H Meats Judging Contest**. Our Intermediate team placed 2nd with three team members placing in the top 10 and our Senior team placed 8th with one team member placing in the top 10.
- Fifty-five (55) youth were recognized for completing and submitting **4-H Clover Awards** which provide scholarships for 4-H summer camps. Additionally, 117 **4-H record books** were submitted by youth documenting their 4-H project work learning experiences over this past year. Clover Award applications and record books provide youth with an opportunity to demonstrate their skills in **time management, record keeping, goal setting and communication**.

For more information, visit the UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County Website at <http://stjohns.ifas.ufl.edu> or contact us at **904-209-0430**.