

UF/IFAS EXTENSION & ST. JOHNS COUNTY WORKING TOGETHER

July, August, September 2020

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. Covid-19 shuttered many businesses around the world beginning in April; however, our facility remained open with limited public interaction. Although our extension delivery shifted from in-person to mostly online programming, Agents adjusted and served our clientele needs during this unusual time. During the third quarter of 2020, Extension Agents and Staff recorded approximately **3,134 contacts** with clientele that included emails, phone calls, office visits and field calls. Agents conducted **52 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 Horticulture Agent trained nine participants for the 2020 Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) Training program. This program provided over 50 hours of education and hands-on training to participants, who will in turn, donate 75 hours of volunteer service during their first year as MGVS to educational gardening programs and projects throughout the county.
- Our Commercial Ag Agent and Ag Center Staff proctored **30 pesticide exams** on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday and Friday of each month in the third quarter.
- Seventy-two participants attended the **2020 Virtual Equine Institute** where they gained knowledge related to nutrition, health, animal, and pasture management. Our Production Agriculture Agent provided guidance on weed identification through a weed panel in which 82% (n=23) of those that completed a survey indicated they plan to utilize in their pasture management strategies.
- On Monday, August 10th, the Hastings Agriculture Extension Team provided a tour to our new **VP for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr. Scott Angle**. This tour included the Hastings Triage Laboratory.
- The **St. Johns County 4-H Program, led by our 4-H Agent**, is offering programming virtually and in-person. We currently have **11 clubs/projects with 94 youth ages 5-18 enrolled**. All clubs are meeting in-person with a limit of 50 youth each. We are fortunate to have **25 adult volunteers**, both leading clubs and assisting with club activities. **Most county programming is virtual or hybrid of virtual and in-person**. Families are excited that clubs can meet in-person but also understand the limitations from UF we operate under.
- Our Family and Consumer Sciences Agent provided educational programming for thirty-four adults on **debt management** that included debt to income ratio, budget management and savings, and how to lower interest rates on credit cards. **Twelve participants contacted their credit card company to reduce their current interest rate**.
- The “Living on a Few Acres” virtual program provided monthly classes on topics such as **blueberry production, blackberry management and backyard pond management** in which 55 participants gained knowledge on basic management practices.



- The **County Council's** first **service project** was writing letters to selected veterans at the **Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Home**. The County Council advisor and president coordinated with the home to select residents to receive the letters; 30 names were chosen. The Council provided the materials and postage for 4-H'ers to create a custom card with a message and mail it to the home. 4-H'ers were encouraged to come to the office and pick up a kit and select a veteran to write to. Within the first seven day, all thirty kits were picked up. Two of the residents who received letters, wrote back to their designated youth to express their appreciation for the letters. The current service project is collecting pet food and toys for a local animal shelter.
- The Commercial Ag Agent presented two posters at the National Association of County Agricultural Agents virtual conference Annual Meeting titled "**Rapid Diagnostics for TCAA Commercial Clientele**" and "**International Engagement to Enhance Local Agritourism.**"
- Five residents learned about food entrepreneurship including **proper canning procedures**, contacts for co-packing, nutrition labeling information, and certified labs for nutrition analysis for retail food production.
- The All-America Selections demonstration garden at UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County Botanical Gardens,

managed by our Horticulture agent and maintained by Master Gardener Volunteers, received third place in the **National All-America Selections 2020 Landscape Design Challenge "Make an Entrance."**

- Our Production Agriculture Agent provided an educational program on culling decision for beef cattle at the **Basics of Beef Management program to 40 participants**. Knowledge was gained related to beef cattle nutrition and structural evaluation.
- Two **County Council Meetings** have been a hybrid of virtual and in-person. The first meeting was conducted through Zoom with low virtual attendance. The second meeting was held through Facebook live and had 76 views. Future meetings will continue to be held virtually and in-person.
- Our Horticulture Department provided programs on **Native Plant Propagation and Botany** to 40 residents including Master Gardener Volunteers and "Exploring the Life of Plants" 904 Naturalist trainees.
- In the September/October (Issue 30) of the **Edible Northeast Florida** magazine, the Commercial Agriculture Agent published the article "**Asian Vegetables Find a Home in St. Johns County**" on page 30. This publication has an average circulation of ~20,000 copies per issue. <https://ediblenortheastflorida.ediblecommunities.com/>

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**.