

UF/IFAS EXTENSION & ST. JOHNS COUNTY

WORKING TOGETHER

January, February, March 2021

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 first quarter of 2021, Extension Agents and Staff recorded approximately **5,117 contacts** with clientele that included emails, phone calls, office visits and field calls. Agents conducted **71 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.



- Five-hundred and ninety-five (595) students and seventeen (17) teachers from five (5) schools participated in the **UF/IFAS Chicken Embryology Projects**, that is led by our 4-H Agent. Teachers who participated in the project reported that students gained a **deeper understanding of the life cycle and needs of a developing embryo, increased skills in observation and recording data, and increased their love of science.**
- Our SJC Horticulture Agent partners with St. Johns County Assistant Branch Librarian to create **monthly video series on “Edible Gardening in St. Johns County”**. Recent topics included composting, fertilizer, and organic gardening.
- Our Production Agriculture Agent **flew 18 flights for a total of 2 hours and 17 minutes** using a DJI Mavic Pro drone. Data collected from these flights is used for scouting, photography and research on artichokes, potatoes, and forages.
- Over **300 students in the Agriscience Program at Gamble Rogers Middle School were able to enjoy fresh strawberries and vegetables** from November through May of this past year using supplies donated by our Family Nutrition Program. Not only do students enjoy freshly grown produce, but the system serves as a great teaching tool for Agriscience concepts on different growing mediums, propagation methods, plant nutrient needs, and how and why to measure pH.
- **Our Commercial Agriculture Agent and SJC Ag Center Staff proctored 48 pesticide exams** on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month in the first quarter. We also added an additional 4th Wednesday of the month for 4-hour Pest Control Operator exams.
- **The Hastings Triage Lab**, managed by our Commercial Agriculture Agent and funded by the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners, provided pH, EC and hardness results for 22 irrigation wells on private farms that allowed them to **make better management decisions that saved them time and money.**
- Thirty-three (33) youth from Flagler, Putnam, and St. Johns County participated in the **Annual Tri-County Potato Project**. The January modified-planting experience included virtual education modules and in-person on-site planting at **the UF/IFAS Extension, Cowpen Branch Farm**. Youth planted three varieties of potatoes that will be used to promote agriculture awareness at harvest. All of the participants intend to return for the harvest in April.
- Seventeen (17) participants at the **2021 Spring Ranchers Forum** learned how to be an **Ag-vocate for Agriculture** after listening to a presentation by our Production Agriculture Agent.



- Ninety-seven (97) participants attended **4 Florida-Friendly Landscaping workshops** taught by our SJC Horticulture Department. Participants learned about selecting the **right plant for the right place, stormwater pond plantings, designing rain gardens, and growing rabbiteye blueberries**.
- **The St. Johns County 4-H Horse Judging & Hippology Teams** placed in the **top three at the State 4-H Horse Judging & Hippology Contests**. This summer, the Senior Team will be advancing to the **Regional 4-H Hippology Contest located in Perry, Georgia**. Youth who participated in this project enhanced their knowledge of equine science and sharpened their decision-making and public speaking skills.
- The **Florida-Friendly Landscape Demonstration Gardens** at UF/IFAS Extension Botanical Gardens have been redesigned and renovated this season. The Welcome Pollinator Garden, Entrance Rock Garden, and Butterfly Garden have all been replanted and spruced up by our Master Gardener Volunteer teams to provide examples of plants that thrive in our area.
- The Commercial Agriculture Agent, in collaboration with Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services/ Office of Agricultural Water Policy and Putnam Soil and Water Conservation District, organized a **soil grid sampling field day** at the Sykes Family Farm in Elkton. This event displayed the process of grid sampling and showed farmers how to make it part of their **BMP efforts and cost-share applications**.
- Twenty-four (24) participants attended a 3-day **FAA Part 107, Drone License Prep class** that was co-taught by our Production Agriculture Agent. 100% (n=9) of participants who took this exam passed.
- The Commercial Agriculture Agent provided a tour of the **SJC-funded artichoke trial** to the **Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association's Leadership Committee**. The committee was exploring the TCAA and our emerging, alternative crops.
- One eleven-year-old member of the **SJC 4-H Environmental Explorers Club** found an owlet on the ground behind his house. At one of our Club meetings, we discussed the HAWKE Wildlife Rescue Organization and what they do for injured and orphaned wildlife. His parent called the center who sent out a volunteer to pick up the orphaned owl. Subsequently, HAWKE sent us photos and is allowing the club to name the owl. The kids are thrilled to be so closely involved in this rescue and see the benefits of **wildlife conservation**. Because of the knowledge he gained, he promoted conservation and environmental stewardship by assisting in rescuing this owlet.
- The UF/IFAS Extension Associate Dean for Ag Programs recruited our Commercial Agriculture Agent to participate in the **statewide pesticide leadership team – PEET (pesticide extension education team)**. This group helps train other agents on how to offer exams and CEU programs, while **updating our clients on new pesticide laws and label changes**. The agent was chosen for her background in pesticide fate and transport in citrus.

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**.