

UF/IFAS EXTENSION & ST. JOHNS COUNTY WORKING TOGETHER

April, May, June 2022

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 2022, Extension Agents and Staff recorded approximately **7,350 contacts** with clientele that included emails, phone calls, office visits and field calls. Agents conducted **61 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.



- The Commercial Ag Agent's FACAA/NACAA Feature Story on "Growing Artichokes in Florida" **won the national award** for her Edible Magazine article on growing artichokes in Florida. <https://ediblenortheastflorida.ediblecommunities.com/food-thought/growing-artichokes-florida>
- Four (4) Agricultural Deputies from 2 South Florida Sheriff Departments participated in a **Livestock Education and Certification for Agriculture Law Enforcement (LECALE)** refresher course on beef cattle presented by our Production Ag Agent. One Deputy visually evaluates approximately 250 head of cattle every day for nutritional issues, if concerns are determined, he contacts the livestock owner and provides guidance on proper care.
- **Nine (9) programs were taught by our Horticulture Agent** on topics such as gardening for health and wellbeing, morphology, and identification of native and invasive trees of northeast Florida, stormwater pondscaping, gardening with herbs in Northeast Florida, houseplant propagation, botanical sketching, garden design, and GI-BMP were taught to 74 St. Johns County residents.
- Our Family and Consumer Science Agent taught the **Build your Bones series** of classes (7) to 280 participants where they gained knowledge related to health, wellness, and nutrition.
- Thirty-nine (39) youth and their families took part in the potato harvest for the **Tri-County 4-H Potato Project**, led by our SJC 4-H Agent, at the Hastings Agricultural Extension Center. On harvest day, Extension professionals from the Tri-County Area collaborated to educate youth about many topics including pollinators, potato grading, drones, and plant parts. As a result of this project, youth gained first-hand experience learning about the potato industry from planting to harvesting, as well as marketing the potatoes.
- The Commercial Ag Agent attended the Florida State Horticultural Society's annual meeting as the **Vice President of Vegetables**, allowing her to preside over the section and business meeting.
- **SJC Family Nutrition Program** worked with 10 sites and taught 64 direct ed classes reaching over 1,064 adult and youth participants. Programming includes support for five school gardens, a Council on Aging (COA) garden and the ARC community campus garden.
- Two graduating St. Johns County 4-H seniors competed for **4-H college scholarships** by interviewing with 4-H stakeholders. These youth were awarded a total of \$3,000 to assist them with their secondary education.
- The Commercial Ag Agent and Ag Center Staff proctored **21 pesticide exams** on the 2nd and 4th Friday, and 4th Wednesday of each month in the second quarter. Numbers have been steadily declining since the adaptation of remote testing.



- Forty-four (44) elementary students in 4th grade at Julington Creek Elementary School participated in an **environmental science program** that was led by our 4-H Agent. After the presentation and activity, the students were able to name at least three pollinators.
- Our Production Ag Agent taught at the **North Florida Beef Cattle Reproduction School** to 25 participants on anatomy and physiology, body condition scoring and hands-on palpation techniques. Participants gained knowledge that enables them to manage their herds to maximize revenue potential.
- The **Hastings Triage Lab** provided diagnostics for 15 crop and soil samples during the second quarter. Farmers commented that diagnostics were needed, but due to a delayed potato season, many did not have the time to acknowledge and report pests to the agent.
- The **SJC Master Gardener Program**, led by our Horticulture Agent, provided educational programming on vermiculture, the science of raising worms to create nutrient-rich compost at 4 events to over 330 youth and adult participants. These events include the SJC 4-H AgEdventures, Kids Ocean Day and Environmental Fair, Tri-County 4-H Potato Day, and Wesley Wells Farm Spring Festival.
- Twelve (12) youth ages five to seven years old attended the **4-H Bugs and Blooms Cloverbud Camp** led by our 4-H Agent. Youth participated in a variety of hands-on activities that increased their understanding and appreciation for plant science, growth, and production. After attending camp, 100% of the youth were able to explain the process of pollination, name the parts of a plant, and identify common pollinators.
- Our Production Ag Agent served as a judge to the Putnam/ St. Johns Farm Bureau Speech Contest, St. Johns County 4-H Speech Contest, and St. Johns County Soil and Water Board Speech Contest. **By practicing and presenting their skills, youth gain experience that prepares them for adult life.**
- The Florida Crunch is a one-day event hosted by local schools in collaboration with the UF/IFAS Family Nutrition Program (FNP) to celebrate **National Farm to School Month**. This event raises awareness of Florida-grown produce and healthy eating by highlighting one fruit or vegetable for students to learn about and sample in a taste test and encourages schools to serve more Florida-grown produce in the cafeteria throughout the year. This year the featured produce was an “Atlantic” variety potato donated by local farmer Bryan Jones of Riverdale Potato Farms. Over 550 samples of an herb potato salad were served to the students of South Woods Elementary. Students participated in a survey of their experience and 15% selected “I Tried it”; 21% selected “I Liked it”; and 64% selected “I Loved it”.
- Four (4) St. Johns County 4-H youth, participating in our **4-H Equine program** that is led by our 4-H Agent, competed at the Area North Horse Show in April. Each of these youth qualified for the State 4-H Horse Show in July. Moving up through the levels of 4-H horse shows is a very competitive process and requires good sportsmanship and a thorough knowledge of horsemanship skills.
- The Commercial Ag Agent completed the harvest of the **thornless blackberry** at UF/IFAS Hastings. The findings allowed her an invitation to participate on the SEED-IT research team for thornless blackberries. These grants are intended for researchers exploring alternative commodities for Florida farmers.
- Seven (7) St. Johns County Youth participated in a 2-day **“Fairy Garden” summer camp** hosted by our Horticulture Agent. During this camp youth were taught design principles, plant propagation, salt dough pot construction, and worked in teams to create fairy gardens.
- Thirty-four participants at a **Pasture Management School** gained knowledge related to equipment need for the small farms pasture management that was presented by our Production Ag Agent.

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**.