

UF/IFAS EXTENSION & ST. JOHNS COUNTY

WORKING TOGETHER

October, November, December 2023

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners and UF/IFAS Extension work in a cooperative effort to provide relevant programming to citizens throughout the County. During the fourth quarter of 2023, Extension Agents and Staff recorded approximately **3,933 contacts** with clientele that included emails, phone calls, office visits and field calls. Agents conducted **24 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.



Ag Awareness Event – Youth involvement



Horse Pasture



4-H Youth – Gingerbread Project

- Our Horticulture agent provided programs to 19 horticulture professionals, including **Green Industries Best Management Practices, Limited Commercial Landscape Maintenance, and Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Professional Certification** field module.
- Our Production Agriculture Agent teamed up with UF Historic St. Augustine, Inc., the Florida Ag Museum, the St. Johns County Cattlemen's Association, the Florida Forestry Service, the St. Johns County Master Gardener Volunteer Program's "Vermiculture Team", UF/IFAS Duval County and Flagler County Extension Agents, and St. Johns County Animal Control to provide an educational program "**Florida Heritage Livestock and Agriculture History**" at Ribera Garden in Downtown St. Augustine to more than 100 participants. These participants learned about cattle, horses, sheep, chickens, forestry, worms and much more.
- The Commercial Agriculture Extension Agent provided **3 farm tours** for state employees, Alabama farmers, and the public, which included 68 people enlightened on local agricultural practices and crops in rotation.
- The **Hastings Triage Lab** provided diagnostics for five samples during the fourth quarter.
- Our Family and Consumer Science Agent taught two **Healthy for Life® workshops** to a total of 24 participants increasing knowledge of daily protein needs, plant-based protein sources, whole grain nutrients, good fiber sources, and simple ways to prepare whole grains.
- For its seventh year, the St. Johns County 4-H Program hosted its annual **Gingerbread House Contest**. This year, forty-three (43) youth entered the contest. By participating in the challenge, youth put their creativity to work while developing engineering, problem-solving, and teambuilding skills.
- The Commercial Ag Agent and Ag Center Staff proctored **18 pesticide exams** on the 2nd and 4th Friday, and 4th Wednesday of each month in the fourth quarter. Surrounding counties continue to utilize SJC for pesticide licensing needs due to the lack of offerings nearby.
- Forty-three (43) attendees took part in the St. Johns County **4-H Holiday Craft Teaching Night** where youth and adult volunteers partnered in teaching a variety of crafts. This event developed members' communication, public speaking, problem-solving, creativity and leadership skills.



Growing Local in St. Johns County Farm Tour



Ag Awareness Event – Downtown St. Augustine



4-H Youth – Pumpkin Project

- **Med instead of Meds**, a six-session online series was taught for five individuals, increasing knowledge of **the Mediterranean-style eating pattern**, the benefits associated with it, and strategies for implementing mindful eating in daily life.
- The annual **Master Gardener Volunteer recognition luncheon** was held in December to thank and honor our volunteers who contributed over 9,500 hours of volunteer service in 2023, as well as to recognize those who have reached 5-, 10-, 15-, 20-, and 25-year milestones of volunteer service.
- A Florida Fish and Wildlife Conversation Commission **Hunter Safety Class** was hosted and co-taught by our Production Ag Agent and 4-H Youth Development Agent. Thirty (30) participants gained knowledge in five areas: hunting ethics and responsibility, hunting laws and regulations, safe firearms handling, clearing, matching, loading and unloading, and safe and effective shot placement. Once the class was complete, attendees took and passed their exam and received their Florida Hunter Safety card from the FWC.
- Two, 4-week workshops were taught for 13 youth, **teaching culinary skills** needed to prepare nutritious foods including measuring techniques, knife skills and safety, using appropriate utensils and cookware, and kitchen safety.
- Twenty-five (25) participants attended the **Livestock Education and Certification for Law Enforcement (LECALE) program** that was co-taught by our Production Agriculture Agent. Agriculture Deputies and Animal Control Officers from various sheriff's departments from throughout Florida learned how to evaluate cattle and horses for body condition scoring and common animal husbandry practices conducted on ranches in Florida.
- Our **Master Gardener Volunteer program** had a **successful fundraising plant sale** as part of our fall event, *Growing Local in St. Johns County*. Proceeds from the sale benefit UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County Botanical Gardens, and other elements of our horticulture programming.
- Our Master Gardener Volunteer program provided a **greenery centerpiece workshop** to 23 St. Johns County residents. This annual event is a favorite that educates about using native and local greenery to make festive table centerpieces for the holiday season.
- The Commercial Agriculture Extension Agent **provided pesticide exam reviews and CEUs** for 3 categories, reaching 91 applicators in collaboration with Florida Turf Grass Association (FTGA) and the UF/IFAS Pesticide Extension Education Team.
- The Commercial Ag Agent teamed up with the FCS Agent and Administrative Assistant to survey the retailer shoppers of the **St. Augustine Amphitheater Farmers Market**. Of the market visitors, 171 participated in our pumpkin/squash variety trial vote for their favorite variety by curb appeal. The fairytale pumpkin "Musquee de Provence" was the fan favorite with 24% of the votes. The pumpkin trials have been financially supported by SJC BOCC since 2019.
- Fifteen (15) youth participated in the **4-H Pumpkin Project**. This project educated youth about harvesting, agribusiness, entrepreneurship, food safety and culinary arts. Throughout the fall season, 4-H members furthered their knowledge of the pumpkin industry at hands-on learning opportunities led by St. Johns County extension agents. Youth hosted a pumpkin stand at a local farmer's market where they raised funds to be put back into the program for next year.
- The Commercial Ag Agent teamed up with the **Southeast Branch Library** to provide a pumpkin program for the public, and started sponsoring the County Seed Library which is hosted at this location. All leftover seeds from research and demonstrations will now be donated for the community to utilize through this library branch.
- Distributed fall issue of **St. Johns Lawn and Garden Gazette** to over 1,400 St. Johns County residents to provide programmatic updates and seasonal gardening information. Articles included topics of epiphytes, pollination, herbs, orchids, botanical gardens, sensory gardens, and cool season gardening.

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