



The Mayo Clover Leaf



March 2024

Lafayette County Extension, Ag and 4-H News

Vol 6 No 3



4-H Has Month of Fun and Learning

Up-Coming Events

Tuesday, March 5: Home School 4-H Club Meeting, 10:00, 4-H Classroom

Tuesday, March 5: Community Club Meeting, 3:00, 4-H Classroom

Tuesday, March 12: Culinary Club Meeting, 3:00, 4-H Classroom

March 18-22: SVYLSS, See Schedule P 5.

Tuesday, March 19: 4-H Anglers Fishing Club Canceled for SVYLSS

Tuesday March 26: Archery Club Meeting 4-H Classroom.

Wednesday, March 27: Senior Commodity Pick-up, Mayo Community Center

Shawn Jackson

Lafayette 4-H commenced the month of February with engaging meetings hosted by the homeschool and community clubs on February 6. The focus of the sessions was centered on a 4-H life skill—caring. Participants delved into discussions about community concerns that youth are passionate about and explored various ways to express care. The meeting took a creative turn as 4-Hers enjoyed crafting scrap wood art before venturing outdoors for recreational activities.

The 4-H Cooking Club celebrated a delightful time on Valentine's Eve by crafting chocolate-covered strawberries. These delectable treats were sourced from local farms in Lafayette County and generously donated by Tom Gardener. In addition to this sweet endeavor, each 4-Her independently prepared their own pan of brownies, showcasing their abilities in reading and following directions, as well as measuring and mixing ingredients.

Ideal weather graced the Angler's Club meeting, held at Pickett Lake, where members experienced moderate success in catching brim and trout using earthworms. The serene setting added to the enjoyment of the fishing expedition. Wrapping up the month, the Archery 4-H Club spent an afternoon honing their skills in shooting compound bows and trying their hand at hatchet throwing. The dedication and hard work invested by these 4-Hers throughout the year are evident in their improved proficiency in both sports. Members of the Archery Club are gearing up for the state 4-H archery contest scheduled for April, providing them with an exciting opportunity to showcase their talents on a broader stage

Johnson Recognized by University

Shawn Jackson

Lafayette County Extension's own Jessica Johnson was recognized last month at the UF Business Professionals Conference with the "Connect, Grow and Shine Award" Dean of Extension Andra Johnson delivered the award saying "Jessica consistently goes above and beyond in her responsibilities, demonstrating a strong commitment to excellence." Jessica has served as an administrative assistant at the Lafayette County extension office for 10 years. Anyone who has visited the Lafayette County Extension office know that Jessica greets each person with a smile and kind word. The Extension office appreciates Jessica and her dedication to the office, university and Lafayette County.



Weather and Agriculture Report

Emily Beach

We had a couple of days with nearly 2 inches of rain each day in the middle of the month and then with the warm weather, it seems as though our plants are thinking it is spring. I might would agree but I always want to throw caution that there is typically a frost before Easter so keep that in mind when you are

thinking about planting and pruning. For planting, March is a good time to get warm-season vegetables (beans, corn, tomatoes, and squash) in the ground but if we have a frost you will need to take some precautions if you know a frost is coming up. Practices that will help protect your garden during a frost are: watering your garden well before the freeze and then during the freeze will protect the roots, flowers, and buds acting as an insulator; covering the rows with cloth, or straw; and/or covering individual plants with cups or buckets. For pruning, for plants that have a spring bloom you want to hold off on that spring bloom is over. If you prune too early, your plants will be susceptible to that cold weather and it will cause damage.

February Rainfall Totals (in)			
	2024	2023	2022
Cooks Hammock	2.15	4.31	1.66
Mallory Swamp	2.09	4.25	1.38
Midway Tower	2.26	3.56	1.37

Cool-Season Forage Dairy Tour held in Lafayette County

Emily Beach

On February 20, a group of around 50 dairy and beef producers, industry leaders, as well as county and state Agriculture, Livestock, and Soil Specialists gathered at White Oak Dairy for a tour of the Cool-Season Forage Variety Trial. At the tour, the forages and their varieties were presented in their final growth stages and specialists discussed their performance and quality in terms of the climate conditions we have seen this year with our well-draining sandy soils. Forages such as triticale, oats, rye, winter pea, chickpea, and vetch were on display as well as mixes that consisted of complementary combinations of the forages. This trial was replicated at the next stop on the tour at Shenandoah Dairy. The tour ended at the North Florida Research and Education Center-Suwannee Valley where the participants had lunch, heard from speakers about nutrient management of cool-season forages, and then went on a tour of the cool-season cover crops and learned how they can be integrated into Livestock Systems.

Cool-season forages are ideal when perennial warm-season pasture grasses become dormant in late fall and winter due to short days, cooler temperatures, and frosts. Planting and growing the cool-season forages are used to supplement livestock feed in terms of grazing and/or silage. Additionally, these cool-season forages act as cover crops to reduce soil loss, retain moisture in the soil, and add organic matter to the soil. If you have any questions about implementing a cool-season forage next fall, please reach out to me by calling the office at 386-294-1279 or stopping by anytime.

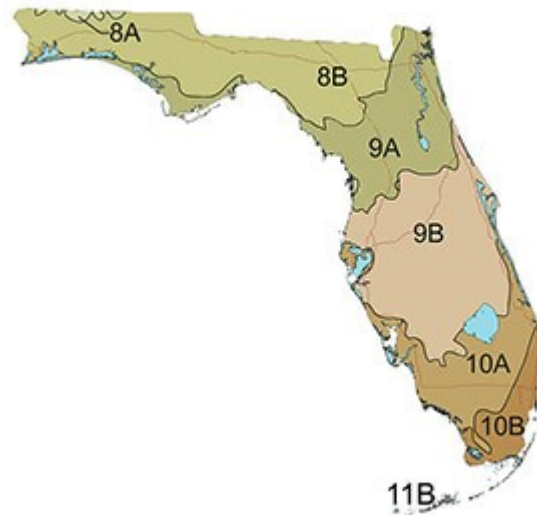
Know Your Planting Zones

Morgan Pearson

The time of year has come once again! You guessed it, it's getting close to planting season throughout the entire state of Florida. Time to start getting the ground broken and seeds put in the ground preparing for an upcoming bountiful harvest, whether it be the garden in your backyard or a commercial row crop farm operation. But, before any of this can be done, there are a couple of things that must be taken into consideration. Things such as soil preparation, choosing the right type of plant, knowing the type of soil you will be planting in, the soil's pH, the list goes on. However, the most important thing to consider is something that is often overlooked. Even by the most experienced of gardeners and farmers. Something as simple as knowing what planting zone you are located in.

What is a planting zone you ask? Well, simply put, a planting zone, also known as a hardiness zone, is the standard by which gardeners, farmers and growers can determine which perennial plants and crops are most likely to thrive in a specific location. The zones are laid out on maps and are based on the average annual extreme and minimum winter temperatures. These temperatures are displayed as 10-degree F zones and 5-degree F half zones.

One state that has the most variation of planting zones is, you guessed it, Florida. Having 3 different types of planting zones throughout the state,



Florida is one of the most diverse states when it comes to planting zones. Other states that have a wide variety of planting zones include most southern states, especially along the marsh and delta areas of the southeast. Florida's 3 planting zones consist of lower, coastal, and tropical planting zones.

It is important to know the differences and locations of these types of zones. Knowing these types of zones is key to choosing the type of plants, or varieties of plants that will grow in the planting zone you are located in. In these different planting zones are different plant varieties that are able to grow in their specific zone. Choosing plants that will not grow or bear fruit in the zone you are located within can lead to frustration, disappointment and unnecessary expenses on plants and fertilizer.

Like us on Facebook

For daily updates on local IFAS, 4-H News and events, visit and "like" our FB Page UF IFAS Extension Lafayette County 4-H.

IFAS Extension is an equal opportunity Institution. We encourage all races, religions and ethnicities to attend our summer programs. There are scholarships available for minority and underprivileged children. Please contact our office for more information.

Lafayette County Extension Office Hosts Timber Production Meeting

On February 15, the Lafayette County Extension Office hosted a Timber Production meeting for landowners to hear from field experts and agencies about successful production and cost-share programs that are available to timberland owners. Lafayette County Forester, Jared Beauchamp, spoke to the group about restoration and management programs offered by the Florida Forest Service and he presented information about recovering timberland from Hurricane Idalia. Garrett McCray presented information about



programs offered through Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency. The group then heard from Jared Jackson from Putnals Premium Pine Straw to learn about the outlook of pine straw and challenges landowners are currently facing as a result of the hurricane. He also spoke to the group about the demand for pine straw and how that market operates and told the group that for pine straw purposes, long-leaf is the most demanded variety. The last presenters of the meeting were Jacob Henderson and Brooks Laminack with Air-time Drone Services. They spoke to the group about using GPS and drone technology for applying herbicides to pines as it offers a more precise and timely application than traditional methods in certain scenarios.

If you have questions about these programs or managing your timberland, please contact me by calling (386)294-1279 or coming by the office.

Spring Lawn Maintenance

Early March is the time for applying herbicides to your lawn to stop the growth of those pesky warm season weeds. If you have questions about what herbicide is appropriate for your turf variety, feel free to contact Emily (386) 294-1279.



Garrett McCray and Jarret Beacham speak to a large audience about reforestation programs at the timber production meeting in Mayo.

Lafayette County 4-H continues its commitment to nurturing the skills essential for a successful lifetime, with a recent focus on public speaking. Lafayette Elementary School served as the host for the Counties' 4-H Florida Power and Light Speech Contest, a remarkable event that drew the participation of nearly 200 enthusiastic young minds.

The speech contest commenced with fourth and fifth-grade students crafting and delivering speeches to their teachers and peers within the classroom setting. To ensure fair and comprehensive evaluation, each class enlisted the expertise of guest judges who played a pivotal role in narrowing down the contenders to five winners per class.

The journey for the top speakers from each class didn't end there; they advanced to a rigorous semi-final contest. Here, the stakes were high, as only the top eight speakers would secure the coveted opportunity to compete at the county finals, a climactic event that unfolded on February 22, 2024.

Judges faced the challenging task of evaluating the contestants based on the composition and delivery of their speeches. The keen competition and high standards set the stage for a truly remarkable showcase of public speaking prowess.

Emerging victorious in this spirited contest were the following young talents:

- 1st Place: Bristol Land
- 2nd Place: Miles Jackson
- 3rd Place: Parker Gaskin

These winners, having demonstrated exceptional skills and poise, now have the privilege of representing Lafayette County on a broader stage. In April, they will vie against other youth from North Florida at the district competition, an exciting opportunity that promises to further hone their public speaking abilities.



Photo left: Bristol Land, Miles Jackson and Parker Gaskins winners of the Lafayette 4-H, Florida Power and Light Speech Contest.

Photo right: The eight finalist competing in the county speaking contest: Bristol Land, Cooper Kirby, Miles Jackson, Sadie Byrd, Trevor Mosley, Tatum Hart, Parker Gaskins and Reese Walker.

The 2024 Lafayette 4-H



Chick Chain

What you need to know to participate:

- Clover-Buds, Junior, Intermediate, and Senior 4-H members are eligible to participate.
- Participants should have their chicks by April 1, 2023
- Participants are responsible for obtaining and purchasing their chicks from vendor of their choice.
- Breeds that are acceptable to enter in the program include: Rhode Island Reds, Australorp, Barred Rock, Leghorn, Wyandotte, Orpington.
- Participants will learn poultry nutrition and care, communication skills and record keeping.
- Youth will raise chicks for 20-24 weeks prior to shows.
- Lafayette County 4-H will have two opportunities to present their raised hen: 1) Lafayette County Chick chain show, 2) Tri-County Chick Chain Show Madison, in September of 2024.
- Youth interested in participating will need to contact the Lafayette County Extension office to be registered in the program.





Lafayette 4-H Senior Commodity Program



Lafayette 4-H is proud to partner with Feeding Florida to bring much needed commodities to the senior citizens of Lafayette County! Many volunteers help make this possible from the team at Second Harvest of Big Bend to local youth and adults in Lafayette County. To ensure the commodity distribution runs as smooth as possible, there are a few things to remember (there have been some changes):

- Please plan to pick up your commodities on the day scheduled for distribution from 1:00-4:00 at the Mayo Community Center.
- If you will be unable to pick-up commodities, please contact the extension office if you are making alternative plans to receive the commodities so we can work with you.
- Commodities not picked up on the day scheduled for distribution will be given out on a first come first serve basis.
- The Lafayette County Extension Office does not stock remaining commodities or serve as a day-to-day food bank.

<u>Day</u>	Date	Time
<u>Wednesday</u>	March 27, 2024	1:00pm – 4:00pm
<u>Wednesday</u>	April 24, 2024	1:00pm – 4:00pm
<u>Wednesday</u>	May 29, 2024	1:00pm – 4:00pm
<u>Wednesday</u>	June 26, 2024	1:00pm – 4:00pm

Youth Learn About Planting Potatoes

Shawn Jackson

In Lafayette Elementary school, second graders eagerly delved into the spring gardening season by planting one of the earliest crops—potatoes. This hands-on experience provided them with valuable insights into cultivating a successful potato crop. Many of the young learners were new to the process and discovered that potatoes could be cut into smaller pieces, which were then planted with the eyes facing up in a soil furrow. With a bit of water, fertilizer, and sunlight, they learned that a bountiful harvest of potatoes could be expected in just 2-3 months. This practical lesson in gardening not only fostered a connection to nature but also equipped the students with the knowledge and skills needed for a successful potato cultivation.

Photo right: Second grade students planting potatoes in the school garden.

Peanut meeting & Core Training Planned for March 5

The annual Lafayette County Peanut Production Meeting will be held March 5, 2024 at the Mayo Community Center. An optional Core training will start at 5:00pm and then dinner and the meeting will start at 6:00pm. 2 Private and Ag Row Crop CEUs will be available. Dinner is being sponsored by Mayo Ag Services and the Florida Peanut Federation.



SVYLSS Is Here!

The Suwanee Valley Youth Livestock Show and Sale is scheduled for March 18-22, 2024. Exhibitors need to be planning out letters to go out to potential buyers and keeping receipts and records for the record book. We have record books printed at the office if you need to come by and get one. Be sure to pay attention to weight, skin and hair, and overall health. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call us.

Here is the schedule:

Record Book Due	March 8, 2024 by 5:00 pm to your local extension office
Swine Weigh-In	March 18, 2024 at 8:00-10:00 am
Swine Showmanship	March 18, 2024 at 6:30 pm
Steer Weigh-in	March 19, 2024 at 9:00-11:00 am
Swine Show	March 19, 2024 at 6:30 pm
Sheep Check-In	March 20, 2024 at 9:00-10:00 am
Steer Show	March 20, 2024 at 6:30 pm
Sheep Show	March 21, 2024 at 6:30 pm
Sale	March 22, 2024 at 9:00 am

Registration at 8:30 and Buyer's Dinner immediately following at the Dixie Grill