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January 2008
1302 11th St. SW
Live Oak, FL 32064-3611
(386) 362-2771

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suwannee.ifas.ufl.edu

EXTENSION DIRECTOR NOTES
Katherine Allen

Congratulations on making it through the holiday season!
Happy New Year! Since this is typically the time of new resolutions, the Suwannee County Extension staff decided to try an overall newsletter to let you know about events at the office. Hopefully, this will give you a better idea of all of the things that are happening and available to you! We hope you like the combined format and that you will give us suggestions on how to improve it. Since Extension is funded through your tax dollars, we are always looking at ways to improve service and reduce costs. This newsletter will also be available online. All you have to do is let us know your email address and we will send out a notification and link to the new edition! In addition, once a year we will include a purge notice. If you want to continue to receive it, please make sure you return the slip.

If you aren't aware of all that Extension provides, check out page two for upcoming classes and events! If you are looking for volunteer activities, we have a number of opportunities both within the office or helping to extend our information into the community.

If you haven't already seen it, we have started a weekly column in the weekend Suwannee Democrat. We look forward to providing information you can use. If you have ideas on something or you would like more information, please let us know!
## January 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hog Ownership Deadline, Mary Ward</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>County Council Meeting, 6:00 PM, Mary Ward</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Hog and Ham Workshop, Gainesville, Mary Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Crop Management Workshop-Gilchrist Co., 8 am, <a href="mailto:csaft318@ufl.edu">csaft318@ufl.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Crop Management Workshop-Suwannee Co., Carolyn Saft, 8 am, <a href="mailto:csaft318@ufl.edu">csaft318@ufl.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help Yourself to a Healthy Home, 9am-12 pm or 5:30pm-8:30 pm, must pre-register, Katherine Allen</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Help Yourself to a Healthy Home, 9am-12 pm must pre-register, Katherine Allen</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>North Florida Tobacco Short Course, Suwannee Co. Extension, Scott Kerr</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Food Handlers Training, 9:00-11:00 AM Suwannee County Extension, pre-registration required $15, Cathy Rogers or Katherine Allen</td>
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## February 2008

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4-H Yard Sale, 8am-Noon, tables for sale, contact Mary Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-22</td>
<td>Annie’s Project, 9am-12, (Tues. Lake City/ Fri. Live Oak), Cathy Rogers or Scott Kerr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>First of 9 weekly sessions, “Take Charge of Your Diabetes”, 5:30-7:30 pm, Lake City, Cathy Rogers</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-18</td>
<td>Fla. State Fair, Tampa, Mary Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4-H County Council Meeting, 6:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Corn Production Meeting, Suwannee Co. Extension, Scott Kerr</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>North Florida Livestock Show, Sale, and Judging Competition, Madison, Mary Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-24</td>
<td>4-H Camp Counselor Training, Cherry Lake, Mary Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>4-H County Events, Suwannee Co. Coliseum, Mary Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Master Gardener Orientation Lake City or Live Oak- TBD. 9:30 AM Carolyn Saft (<a href="mailto:csaft318@ufl.edu">csaft318@ufl.edu</a>)</td>
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## March 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-18</td>
<td>Master Gardener Volunteer Training, contact Carolyn Saft @ 386-362-2771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tri County Peanut Meeting, Lafayette Community Center, Time TBD, Scott Kerr</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Florida Friendly Landscaping Event- Fanning Springs 9:00am-4:00 pm, Carolyn Saft</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>County Council Meeting, 6:00 PM, Mary Ward</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Food Managers Training and Certification. 8:30am-5:00pm Suwannee County, pre-registration required, bring photo id. Certification good for five years. Fee. Call Toll free 888-232-8723.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4-H Day at the Capitol, Mary Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Fanning Springs Garden Festival, contact Carolyn Saft @ 386-362-2771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Master Gardener Class, 8:30-4:00 PM Lake City and Live Oak, Carolyn Saft, <a href="mailto:csaft318@ufl.edu">csaft318@ufl.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Suwannee County Fair Hog Weigh-in 7:00-1:00 PM, Mary Ward</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Suwannee County Fair Steer Weigh-in 8:00-12:00 PM, Mary Ward</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Suwannee County Fair Hog Show 6:00 PM, Mary Ward</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Suwannee County Fair Steer Show 6:00 PM, Mary Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Suwannee County Fair Opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>State 4-H Land Judging Contest, Location TBA, Mary Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Suwannee Co. Fair Awards/Sale 1:00 PM, Mary Ward</td>
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Solutions for Your Life

Family & Consumer Sciences

Cathy Rogers, Family and Consumer Sciences/4-H Agent

Why Should I Keep Records?

It’s the time of the year when people start to think about doing their income taxes. In doing so, some start to think about how they should have been filing paperwork all during the past year in preparation for this event. Some will decide to get organized now making next year’s tax prep a more streamlined process.

Recordkeeping is important not only for tax purposes but also:

- So that expenses may be planned and controlled to gain the greatest benefit from your income.
- To determine your net worth.
- For emergencies such as death, or loss due to fire, theft, or storms.
- To protect yourself against another person’s mistakes or false claims.

Where Should I Keep My Records?

Use a safe deposit box or fire safe strong box (rated to withstand 1,700°F for 1 hour) for the following items:

- Birth or death certificates or adoption papers
- Marriage certificates or divorce decrees
- Citizenship papers

Use a cardboard or other letter file box for records which do not need to be kept in a safe deposit or strong box. Use a method that works for you. Most people find it most efficient to use folders or envelopes and file according to topic, year, or month.

Both spouses should be familiar with the family’s financial matters. Older children should know where the records are kept and the person to contact in an emergency.

Proper care and safekeeping of your financial record and business papers can be of utmost importance to your family. Taking some time now to organize will be time well spent.

For more information and/or sample financial management forms contact Cathy Rogers (386) 362-2771 cjrogers@ufl.edu

References: Records and Valuable Papers¹, Josephine Turner, Nayda I. Torres and Vervil Mitch-
My name is Bonnie Box and I am the Program Assistant for the Family Nutrition Program in Suwannee County. My office is at the Suwannee County Extension Service next to the coliseum. I was hired last summer to work with the schools and other agencies to teach people about good nutrition.

The Family Nutrition Program (FNP) is a nutrition education program for families and individuals that are on a limited budget. This program helps people to:

- Improve their diets through selection of nutritious foods.
- Better select and store food.
- Handle foods utilizing food safety knowledge which will lead to less food borne illnesses.
- More effectively manage food resources.

Program activities include:
- Small group educational programs
- Food Preparation demonstrations
- Distribution of newsletters and fact sheets

FNP educators, all over the United States, are teaching our young children in schools about the different food groups and the importance of choosing foods that help them grow.

Parents and care givers are learning about meal planning and preparing low-cost, nutritious meals for the family.

Seniors at congregate meal sites are learning about keeping food safe, eating on a budget, and preparing meals for one or two.

Most of my work, at the moment, is centered around Suwannee Primary School. Each month I teach a nutrition lesson to almost every Pre-K, K, and 1st grade class (including the exceptional education class). That’s 42 different classes including almost 900 children. My lessons are largely based on the new MyPyramid. They include the importance of making healthy choices when you eat and to include physical activities in your day, every day. My goal is to teach our community’s children how to be healthy so that they will make healthier decisions in their lives, not only now, but for the rest of their lives. I know that they don’t buy the groceries for their households, but they certainly influence the choices that are made by those who do buy them for the family, and most make their own selections in the school cafeteria at lunchtime.

(Continued on page 11)
Cold Tolerant Plants for Your Landscape

Carolyn Saft, Suwannee River Partnership Education Coordinator/Horticulture

Winter gardening brings with it rewards and challenges. The weather can change very dramatically from one day to the next. Temperatures can rise to the mid-eighties and then suddenly drop to the twenties or even below. These temperature fluctuations can take their toll on plants that are not cold hardy. One tool we can use to help determine what plants are cold hardy is the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map, (http://www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/ushzmap.html). This map indicates we are in zone 8b where the average annual minimum temperature is 15° – 20° F. Many books and nursery tags list what the plant’s hardiness zone is so that you can make good choices in plant selection. Your safest bet is to select plants in our zone. But if you are daring, you can try other zone plants keeping in mind they may not take the cold or perform well in our summer heat.

Our libraries stock plenty of gardening books so go take a peek and while you are there you can get internet access to the above website.

If you would like to add a little color to the landscape while many trees are deciduous and the landscape is looking bleak, try planting a few annuals where you can see them as you enter and leave the house or can see them from the inside. A few good choices are calendulas, dianthus, ornamental cabbage or kale, pansies, petunias, snap dragons and sweet alyssum. Be sure and plant these annuals in well drained areas where they will get at least 4-6 hours of sun per day. My petunias, snapdragons and pansies always bring a smile to my face as I come and go. Winter annuals will flourish if they are given light applications of a fertilizer like 15-0-15. In winter, avoid using ammoniac forms of nitrogen fertilizer because plants don’t absorb it as well during cold weather. A few of these flowers are even edible so try adding pansies or snapdragons to your salad or in ice cubes to add a little color and flair to your meal. As with any edible, try these in small amounts to be sure you are not allergic to them.

If you like camellias, now is a great time to pick out new cultivars and varieties while they are blooming. Keep in mind; camellias prefer light shade to partial sun in areas with well drained acidic soils. Go to http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/ for more detailed information on varieties of camellias.

You can also add interest to your yard and put food on the table by selecting a sunny spot to plant a few winter vegetable transplants like broccoli, cabbage, collards, cauliflower and bulbing onions. You can direct seed a variety of vegetables including arugula, beets, carrots, English peas, lettuce, mustard, radishes and Swiss chard. Swiss chard has many brightly colored stem varieties including “Bright Lights”, “Rainbow” and “Burpee’s Rhubarb”.

If it is too cold for you to be outside, winter is a great time for planning your spring garden or landscape improvements. So, do your homework and look for plants suited to our area and you will have better success in your landscape. Happy Gardening!
Weed Control in Summer Pastures

Scott Kerr, Agriculture/ Natural Resource Agent

The last couple of years have certainly been tough for some folks involved in agricultural production, especially those people that are producing a crop. The droughts have affected everything from vegetable production, row crops, and forages, and it is not isolated to only Florida. Many southeastern states are under the same crisis, and in some states it is worse. We, however, can still be thankful. Here is an issue that I would like to express while you prepare for the upcoming production year. Pasture management is widely taken for granted during the year. We require our pastures to produce and feed our cows, but in many cases the pastures are overgrazed. Overgrazing may be directly related to lack of rain, but regardless of the reason, it would be a good idea to adjust your cattle numbers appropriately. Here are a few ideas.

Having a good stand of summer grass, as fall approaches, will help sustain you throughout the winter season. Supplementing with cool season forages will help dramatically. Try to design your forage availability to meet the needs of your herd. If you don’t have enough acres then you may have to sell some cows.

Weeds will directly compete with your forage crops, and if you are trying to grow beef then you will need the grass. It is true that cows will eat many of the weeds but then they spread the weed seed, and that makes it harder to clean up the pastures. Constant cow traffic will weaken and thin overgrazed sod. Weeds will take over the thin areas.

If you decide on a herbicide for weed control here is an important factor. Weeds that mature are harder to kill. Timing is essential. The best time to kill weeds is while they are young, tender, and actively growing. Don’t expect to get good control, or any control, if you are trying to kill mature weeds that have hardened off. Many of the best herbicides simply won’t be effective. Mature weeds will conserve water during dry periods. They will also develop a heavy, waxy leaf surface to further hold water in the plant. Herbicides have a hard time getting through that protective waxy coating, and if there is no moisture to send systemic materials to the root zone, they won’t work either. Better to keep it mowed down before seeds form. However, keep in mind that if you plan to spray herbicides don’t do it for at least three days after mowing. Likewise, don’t mow for at least three days after spraying.

Last and final thought is one that was shared with me by my District Director. He has a saying, “If it don’t rain, it don’t matter”. Meaning, no matter what you put into the soil, no matter what you plant, no matter what you spray, no matter what it costs, if it doesn’t rain in a suitable time (or if you don’t receive some kind of moisture) then your inputs may be lost. That makes it awful hard to figure out how to manage sometimes, but if it was easy then anybody could do it! Thank you Suwannee County Producers.
It’s the Real (Seal) Thing --- Milk

Dr. Mary Sowerby, Regional Specialized Agent-Dairy

We all know, “Milk Does a Body Good” and has been called, “Nature’s Most Nearly Perfect Food”, but sometimes we forget just why we should all have “Three-a-Day” portions of dairy products.

Human bodies need a balance of nutrients daily for optimal health and well-being. Cow milk was designed by nature to provide optimal nutrition for calves, as human milk is tailor-made for human babies. Fortunately for humans, even in Biblical times (when Canaan was considered the land of milk and honey), milk from other animals was known to provide excellent nutrition for humans too.

Today we know the chemical composition of the milk of virtually every mammal on planet earth. From that we know why milk nutrients, particularly from cows, are beneficial to men, women and children.

Nutrient 1: Water

Most cow’s milk is about 88% water, the nutrient all people need in the highest quantity.

Nutrient 2: Protein

About 3.3% of cow’s milk is protein, of which casein is the predominant form (2.5%), followed by whey, albumen and many other proteins. These supply many essential amino acids needed to build proteins in human bodies for strong muscles, healthy hair, and ever so much more.

Nutrient 3: Carbohydrates

Lactose, the principle sugar found in milk is a disaccharide (composed of two simple sugars) – glucose and galactose.

Glucose is the most important energy-supplying sugar in the human body. Some people lack the enzyme, lactase, in their stomachs to break down lactose into glucose and galactose. By either taking supplemental lactase pills when consuming dairy products or eating primarily lactose-free dairy products (like aged Cheddar or Swiss cheese or yogurt which contains beneficial bacteria which aid in lactose digestion), stomach discomfort caused by lactose can be avoided. If you have not been drinking milk or eating dairy products regularly, introduce them to your diet gradually, so your body will have the chance to begin lactase production again in sufficient quantities. Lactase is a use it or lose it enzyme in the digestive track.

Nutrient 4: Fats

Whole milk from the grocery store is standardized at 3.25% milk (or butter) fat. Fats are highly condensed stores of animal energy needed (in moderation) for optimal health. For those of us already storing more energy (fat) than we need, 2% or skim milk can be better choices to drink.

Nutrient 5: Minerals

Most people do not realize milk is higher in potassium (average 0.155 grams/100 milliliters) than calcium (average 0.125 g/100 ml). Therefore grabbing a glass of milk, along with a banana, in case of potassium shortage can be beneficial. Milk is also an excellent source of electrolytes to drink during sports or when outside sweating a lot for any reason.

Milk is high in phosphorus which, along with calcium, is needed to build healthy bones and teeth. We now know that to prevent

(Continued on page 11)
Suwannee County 4-H’ers Win Big at Lafayette County Farm Judging Contest and the North Florida Fair

Suwannee County 4-H members recently competed at the Lafayette County Farm Judging Contest. Our senior team consisting of Philip Horvath, Jacob Kerr, T.J. Burke and Tineke Swart placed first overall. Our Intermediate team consisting of Carley Herring, Kevin Paulk and Scarlett Mobley, and our junior team consisting of Shawn Belanger, Samantha Kilmire and Fallon Kerr also placed first. Philip Horvath was the highest scoring senior competitor while Scarlett Mobley and Shawn Belanger were the highest scoring intermediate and junior competitors respectively. Philip Horvath, Andrew Horvath and Samantha Kilmire were in the 4-H Farm Manager Contest. Jacob Kerr, Andrew Horvath, and Samantha Kilmire were the high scoring individuals in the 4-H Farm Manager Contest. Suwannee County 4-H members Kaila Dalton, Brandon Hucko, Ashley Low, Erik Swart, David Duckwiler, Katherine Schultz, Trinity Roberts, Brady Roberts, David Thomas, Amber Lewis, Kara Holtzclaw and Dillon Harrison also competed.

On Saturday, November 10, several members competed in the Agriculture Judging contest at the North Florida Fair in Tallahassee. The senior team consisting of Philip Horvath, T.J. Burke, Jacob Kerr and Tineke Swart placed first overall. Philip Horvath was the high scoring individual. The junior team consisting of Fallon Kerr, Brandon Hucko, Shawn Belenger, and Cole Herring placed third overall. Scarlett Mobley, Kevin Paulk, Carley Herring, Samantha Kilmire, Erik Swart, Ashley Low, and David Duckwiler also participated.

This type of contest provides 4-H members the opportunity to learn how to accurately evaluate market and breeding livestock, and other farm commodities, as well as gain the communication skills that are useful in any career or educational path. The program also instills qualities such as confidence, decision making, teamwork, leadership, and dedication that can best be learned outside of a classroom setting.

If your child is interested in this activity, or any other 4-H activity, please contact Mary Ward at the 4-H office.
Increased concern over the impact of agricultural practices on water quality in Florida has resulted in the grower’s need to adopt Best Management Practices (BMPs). The successful adoption of BMPs in plasticulture production of vegetables in North Florida has been greatly facilitated by Extension programs in conjunction with industry and other agency involvement. This collective group is known as the Suwannee River Partnership. Growers are more likely to adopt BMPs when they can evaluate them on their own farm. Long term educational program efforts including hands-on teaching workshops at a research facility combined with on-farm demonstrations proved to be a very effective strategy in helping vegetable growers using plasticulture improve water and nutrient management practices.

Many vegetable growers in the Suwannee Basin region of North Florida have adopted drip irrigation and plastic mulch over the past twenty years to produce vegetables such as tomato, bell pepper, eggplant, cucumber, squash, muskmelon, and watermelon. Soils in the area are sandy with low water holding capacity (<10%) and low organic matter content (<1.5%). The increase in production costs has also emphasized the need for improved irrigation practices and a better understanding of water movement in mulched beds. Growers’ understanding of the interdependence between fertilization, irrigation, and nutrient leaching below the root zone was increased through a targeted effort supported by USDA, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (www.sare.org) on farm project.

UF/IFAS county extension agents and specialists have been working with Suwannee Valley’s vegetable growers who use plastic mulch and drip irrigation to refine their management of the technology since it was introduced to the region in the late 1980s. The emphasis of the educational program in the past 5-10 years has been to improve efficiency of water and nutrient management. The educational approach was to first demonstrate the new technology at the Center via field days and workshops, then follow-up by demonstrating that technology on grower’s fields throughout the region.

Educational efforts have included: on-farm demonstrations using soil moisture sensors, Florida Drip Irrigation Schools, plant sap measurements, mobile blue dye injection to show growers the movement of water in the soil profile.

The most recent and perhaps most popular demonstration that was taken to 20 area farms was the use of blue dye injected into the irrigation system to see how quickly the water moves downward in the soil in their field. The blue dye is used to be able to actually visualize the wetting pattern under the drip tape. After injection of the blue dye, growers followed their normal irrigation schedules for one week and then a cross section of the soil profile under the mulch was dug to measure how far the water and nutrients moved.

The growers showed great interest in using new technology such as moisture sensors and Cardy meters, and seeing the movement of dye on the “digging” visits. It was very common for growers to make immediate changes in irrigation schedules, especially irrigation event durations early in the season based on what they observed. The greatest challenge in managing the leaching from over irrigation occurred in the early part of the season, weeks 1-5 after planting.
Did you know that since 1994, the number of community farmers’ markets has grown nationally at a rapid rate? This trend is being fueled by consumers who want the freshest products available directly from local farms. The 2007 National Farmers’ Market Directory indicated that there are over 4,385 markets scattered across the US, up 18.32% in just the last two years. With the number of markets continuing to increase in Florida as well, this presents a great opportunity for small to mid-sized farmers to become involved.

According to Sharon Yeago, president of the Florida Association of Community Farmers’ Markets, Inc., there is a huge need for more farmers to ‘go to market’, particularly in more urban areas! She is constantly being asked by market managers to help locate more farmers for their markets.

Some of the benefits of using this direct marketing approach to sales are little or no cost in getting started, immediate cash flow, no middleman so more dollars for the farmer, advertising by the market resulting in a steady stream of customers and reduced transportation, packaging and staffing costs. Of course there are some challenges as well. These might be the limited opportunity to ‘grow the farm’, markets days and rules may not fit the needs of the producer, markets may be too far away and the farmer might not be a ‘people person’ which is critical to the success of this type of marketing.

Having said all that, I still feel that community farmers’ markets are an excellent marketing opportunity particularly for small and newly established farmers to make money, contribute to their community’s stability and most importantly of all - tell the story about how vital farming is to Florida!

If you would like to know where the community farmers’ markets are in your area, go to www.florida-agriculture.com/consumers/farmers_markets.htm or contact Sharon Yeago at sharon@yeago.net.
Milk

(Continued from page 7)

osteoporosis (weakening of the bones) later in life, a strong bone mass must be accumulated as a teenager. Adequate amounts of calcium and phosphorus are especially important for teens, which is why it is recommended they have four portions of dairy products daily. Everyone else needs their three-a-day of dairy products to help prevent osteoporosis, tooth decay and hypertension.

**Nutrient 6: Vitamins**

Cow milk is primarily high in Vitamin A and, when fortified as most grocery store milk is, Vitamin D. Vitamin A is essential for eyesight and in many other body tissues. Vitamin D is needed for proper calcium and phosphorus absorption from the intestines and building of bone.

Milk truly “Does a Body Good” from protecting the stomach lining when ulcers are developing, to helping prevent cancer, to helping children grow to their full potential. Enjoy “3-a-Day” (4 for adolescents) of milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream and all the other forms of dairy products for your health and happiness.

Family Nutrition

(Continued from page 4)

I have an exciting new curriculum to use this year. It’s called *The OrganWise Guys* series, and I love to use it. The kids learn so much from the books, videos, and activities. The lessons are well thought out and clever. They teach the children four very important principles:

- Eat a low-fat diet
- Eat a high-fiber diet
- Drink lots of water
- Get regular exercise

*The OrganWise Guys* live inside specially-made dolls called Organ Annie and Organ Andy. They help me to illustrate how to make smart choices every day.

In addition to going to the primary school, I have gone to Suwannee County Health Department and to our library to do programs. Come to the *Family Nutrition Program* educational activities and you’ll learn about meal planning, healthy eating for the family, and how to stretch your food dollars.

For more information, call the Suwannee County Extension office at (386) 362-2771. Ask for me, Bonnie Box.
Thank YOU!

Master Gardener volunteers who constructed the lattice fence used for displaying items at our exhibits.

HCE Council and Happy Homemakers Club for sharing your holiday festivities with the Suwannee County Extension folks.

Congrats to the Suwannee County 4-H Livestock Judging Team. The senior team won 1st place and the junior team won 3rd place! Thanks for representing us so well!