

The Year In Review



2014 UF/IFAS/Union County Extension

Note From the Director

Welcome to Union County Extension. The service offered to the citizens of Union County is a partnership between Union County Board of County Commissioners and the University of Florida/IFAS. The mission of our Office is to provide scientifically based agricultural, human and natural resource knowledge that citizens can use in making decisions which contribute to an improved life. Please feel free to contact us by telephone, e-mail or drop in at the Extension Office. You may wish to learn more about the services we provide by visiting us at our website: <http://union.ifas.ufl.edu>.

Basil Bactawar, Director & Agent
Union County Cooperative Extension

Program Impact

- ◆ **Cattle and Forages:** Hay and cattle account for a major part of agriculture production. The County Extension program focuses on improving producers productivity through training and advisory outreach. Last year our Extension office was involved in training producers in cow/calf production. There were 217 beef, hay and forage producers who attended six training sessions in 2014. These trainings are equivalent to \$21,700 as savings to producers. There has been an estimated increase of 400 acres of land cultivated with winter and summer forages. The Bermuda Stem Maggot continues to be a problem in forage production as researchers work to find an effective control for this pest.

- ◆ **Horticulture:** Thirty people received training in Master gardening, and using 5-gallon hydroponic buckets to grow vegetables. This training is equivalent to \$3,000 in savings to them. The intent of teaching residents to use hydroponic buckets for growing vegetables is to increase their consumption. Apart from the activities in horticulture, some initiatives are being taken to save the pecan trees in Union County. The prionous beetles cause damage to the roots of the tree with eventual death. Eleven traps were set up in 2014 to measure the level of infestation. In 2015, the Agent will be working in collaboration with an entomologist to test a biological control method using pheromones.
- ◆ **Small Ruminants:** Small ruminants present some business opportunities because of the current demand for their meat especially by the ethnic community. To this effect, Union County Extension has provided training on the calculation of cost production, feeding and parasite control in goats. Woolen sheep breeds do not grow well in Florida because of the humid conditions and their thick coat. The Extension office developed infor-

Meet our Faculty and Staff

Basil Bactawar	<i>Director, Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent</i>
Samara Deary	<i>Family and Consumer Sciences Agent</i>
Kimberly Shaw	<i>Family Nutrition Program Assistant</i>
Amanda Rhodes	<i>4-H Youth Development Assistant</i>
Pamela Toney	<i>Executive Secretary</i>

Program Impact

mation on breeds of sheep recommended for the hot and humid climate of Florida. Sixty-seven participants attended 3 small ruminant events during 2014, and this is equivalent to \$6,700 in savings to them.

- ◆ **Pesticide Education:** The proper and continued use of pesticides is necessary to maintain profit margins in agriculture. The problem of pesticide residues on produce justifies the need to continue training pesticide applicators to minimize the risks that pesticides pose to the people. Another problem with pesticide use is its potential to contaminate the soil, surface water, and eventually ground water. Pesticide education continues to be a Tri-County initiative through Bradford, Baker and Union Counties. This program has trained 51 participants, and the total impact of this training on the local economy is estimated at \$66,000 for 2014.
- ◆ **Pond Management:** Twenty pond owners attended two workshops in 2014 which is equivalent to \$7,000 in savings to them. This service included taking water samples for analyses. Since 2011 the Agent has responded to approximately 40 pond calls, did 34 water analyses and trained 42 pond owners. The pond calls have since been reduced because almost all the pond owners are now able to manage their pond so as to prevent fish kill, especially during summer months.
- ◆ **4-H Youth Development:** The Union County 4-H Program is designed to engage youth in positive pursuits that build their leadership and life skills and prepare them to fulfill their civic duties. Research has shown that 4-H youth tend to have higher grades and enroll in post-secondary education. They tend to be physically active. They are less likely to use drugs and alcohol, and thus less likely to end up in trouble with the law. Union County 4-H program continues to increase in enrollment and make im-

provement in the skills of youth in the county. At the end of 2014, total youth membership increased from 117 to 135 members which represents an increase of 6.8%. Financial donations for 2014 were \$10,500 compared to \$6,000 in 2013. This represents a 75% increase in donations. There were 3,003 participants in planned 4-H activities. Volunteers as club leaders donated a total of 388 hours of their time which is equivalent to \$8,241. One hundred and thirty youth participants attended the Annual 4-H Awards Banquet.

- ◆ **Family & Consumer Science:** Programs are developed to address the Union County health problems. The FCS Agent applied for a grant through USDA to fund the Family Nutrition Program with an impact of \$50,000 to the county. The grant is servicing SNAP eligible participants in teaching them how to prepare low cost healthy meals as well as ways to reduce sodium, fat and added sugar. Rural Leap Weight Management Study will be offered as a program to promote lifestyle change over a 22 month time frame.

Union County Cooperative Extension

Number of Educational Materials Developed	43
Number of Clientele Contacts	38,967
Field Consultations	94
Office Consultations	151
Telephone Consultations	701
Group Teaching Participants	506
E-mail Consultations	420
Website Visits	36,478
Total	77,360

