

# Orange and Blue, Here for You!

**UF** | **IFAS Extension**  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



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Edited by Mace Bauer and Paulette Tomlinson

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Carree Olshansky Musgrove, CED and Family & Consumer Sciences Extension Agent

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Before you know it, the new year will be here and 2017 Extension programs will be underway. Every fall Columbia County Extension Agents begin planning for the upcoming year. A key part of the planning process is engaging community leaders to ensure our programs meet the local needs of Columbia County.

There are two different types of advisory committees, the overall advisory committee and program specific advisory committees, such as 4-H Youth Development, Agriculture, or Family and Consumer Sciences. The overall advisory committee guides the long-term direction of the County Extension office. Program specific advisory committees help set priorities for new and existing program areas.

The role of the advisory committee is twofold: to advise and to advocate.

An effective advisory committee will be made up of a group of stakeholders, representative of the demographics for the county being served. Establishing and maintaining dialogue with local stakeholders is essential in planning impactful extension programs. Engaging stakeholders allows for Extension agents to hear first hand the needs and issues within the community. Working together, advisory committees help to identify program needs and assist with setting priorities. Involving advisory committees in the planning process helps build transparency into our programs. They also provide

advice on how to reach target audiences, increasing overall program participation.

Advisory committee members act as our voice in the community. The public roles many committee members hold offer a "natural" platform for them to support Extension and promote programs offered locally. As supporters of Extension, advisory committees can also market strategic initiatives throughout the year.

Advisory committees are an effective tool to ensure we are serving our communities. With their support, we will develop and implement programs designed to meet the specific needs in Columbia County.

## Weight Management Program NOW in Columbia County

Are you looking for a way to lose weight and get healthier? A new weight management program is now available at the Columbia County Extension Office! This no-cost, healthy lifestyle program aims to help participants lose weight, increase fit-

ness, improve nutrition, and manage stress. Weekly weight-loss sessions will be conducted by experts in weight management, nutrition, and physical fitness. Compensation for travel to sessions will be provided. Call for 352-273-5235 for more information.



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## Suwannee River Partnership Education Team Improves Communication and Builds Functional Relationships

### Mace Bauer, Agronomy & Commercial Horticulture Extension Agent III



The Suwannee River Partnership Education Team (SRP) has held regular monthly breakfast meetings since 2004. The main strategy of the initial education team was to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) on area farms. Participants consistently identified inter-agency communication about water and agriculture issues as the fundamental purpose of the SRP. A secondary theme that emerged was the importance of “speaking with a singular collective voice” to limit confusion among farmers about BMPs, agency roles and programs.” UF/IFAS Extension Columbia County agent, Mace Bauer was nominated leader of the SRP Education Team in 2013. The core purposes of the SRP/BAT Education Team have remained largely unchanged since inception.

In 2016, Mace Bauer, Dr. Wendy-Lin Bartels (UF/IFAS School of Forest Resources and Conservation), and

Ondine Wells (UF/IFAS Agricultural Education and Communication) developed research to explore the dynamics of participation in the SRP/BAT Education Team in order to better understand the factors that might impact the effectiveness of similar multi-stakeholder partnerships. Participants often mentioned “communication,” followed by “cooperation,” “sharing,” and “awareness.” Participants also noted networking, working together, partners, and problem solving as ways that they collaborate.

Agriculture was seen as the central topic with BMPs and water as additional core themes. These themes are very consistent with the purpose as defined by the originators of the group: to increase communication between agencies working on agriculture, water resource issues, and best management practices.

The SRP Education Team meetings served as a model upon which to base the formation of statewide efforts, mirroring their purpose: One participant said, “There’s lots of information out there and that BMP team provides an avenue to communicate and share that information across agency boundaries, more so than a group email.”

Participants in the SRP Education Team reported that the format used is valuable to gain information; 96% of participants reported the collaboration was moderately to extremely important to gain information. Another primary goal of the group is building relationships; and 100% reported the SRP is extremely important to building relationship with colleagues, farmers, audiences, or other institutions.

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## Farm to Table – Making the Nutrition Connection

### Carree O. Musgrove, County Extension Director, Family & Consumer Sciences Agent II

Each year UF/IFAS Extension Columbia County holds Farm to Table during the week of the County Fair. The Farm to Table program educates first grade students about agriculture in the community and where their food comes from. The stations included Poultry, Beef & Dairy, Horticulture, Swine, Goats, and Nutrition.

At each station, students learned about the connection from the farm to the table. At the nutrition station, youth learned about the five food groups and then identified specific foods within each category. While it is important to know where your food comes from, it is also important to know how to turn that food into a properly balanced and

nutritious meal.

Carolyn Jaeger, Family Nutrition Program Assistant, said “the most satisfying part of my job is when a student makes the connection with what the animals need to eat to be healthy and what we need to eat to be healthy.”



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## Just Clucky

Jen Chasteen, 4-H Assistant and Dr. Cindy Higgins, 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent



4-H volunteers Reece and Emy Chasteen show Five Points Elementary students their 4-H Poultry project fowl and make thank you cards to Pilgrim's Pride and Central States Enterprises.

4-H Embryology Project makes impact on 5th graders for life cycle awareness and improvement in observational skills.

For the consecutive 6th year the 4-H Embryology Project has made an impact on Columbia County 5th graders in the area of STEM with an improvement in life cycle awareness, animal care, time-management and observation skills. For the 2016-17 schoolyear 9 classrooms and 220 students have participated in the 23-day project. Fifth grade teachers check out a kit that contains an incubator, curriculum, brooding supplies and a 21-day countdown calendar along with fertile poultry eggs to hatch out in their classrooms. This

year, Pilgrim's Pride donated eggs from local farms and Central States Enterprises donated feed for hatched chicks.

"My students came together to check on the eggs," commented Patricia Way, 5th grade teacher at Summers Elementary. "They cleaned the chicken incubator and cage and even mourned over the passing of 2 of the chicks that died."

4-H youth volunteers gave a poultry orientation to classrooms before teachers started the incubation process. The 4-Hers instructed students on how to set up the incubator and troubleshoot during the incubation and hatching/brooding pro-

cess. They also brought in their 4-H hens/roosters and gave students a chance to touch, feed or hold the fowl.

Columbia County 4-H Agent Dr. Cindy Higgins and 4-H Program Assistant Jen Chasteen continue to serve area youth and teachers in providing events, programs, projects and clubs to promote STEM education and critical thinking skills and to enhance local school curriculum. For more info on 4-H call UF/IFAS Extension at 386-758-1030.

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## Community Partners in Education: Working with Worms Dixie Donovan, STEM Educator, Robotics Coach

In August our school year started with Potash Corporation giving us a grant to start a Robotics team with First Lego League. The topic and focus for this year was Trash Trek. This is how we entered the Robotics world. Our Robotics team at Fort White Middle School, the Indibots, chose to try to reduce the amount of wasted food from the cafeteria going to the landfill and turn it into compost. We invited the horticulture agent and master gardener from UF/IFAS Extension to come and teach us about composting. They came and did a very informative demon-

stration about worms and worm castings. We took this information and made a project about making worm boxes and feeding the worms scraps from our cafeteria. It was so much fun to be part of the activity when they assembled the boxes, designed the experiment, and added the components (including the worms!)

At our December qualifying competition at the Swamp Stomp in Gainesville, Florida, we were awarded first place for our project. We showed how we could use the worms to turn some of the wasted food from our cafeteria into compost. The judges

were very impressed with us because even though our project is not actually original, they appreciated that our castings would help other organizations on our campus. We have worked with LEAK (League of Environmentally Kids) and will be working with FFA. We have just written a grant to make 60 worm boxes that will be used to implement the information from our project. We hope to show through the scientific process how the worms can improve our environment and teach other students at the school about worms and their castings.

### Update by Nichelle Demorest, UF/IFAS Extension Agent, Columbia County

Dixie Donovan received her grant to make worm boxes in the spring of 2016. The robotics theme for this school year (2016-2017) is 'Animal Allies' and the Indibots will be continuing their research on ways to work with worms. It has been such a treat to keep in touch with the progress of this innovative group!



UF/IFAS Extension provides practical education you can trust, to help people, businesses and communities solve problems, develop skills and build a better future. When you use UF/IFAS Extension, you can be confident that experts have reviewed and developed educational programs to ensure that you receive the best information for your needs. UF/IFAS Extension employees and volunteers work hard at improving the quality of life for our neighbors and communities. We provide solutions to everyday problems. We offer a variety of educational programs and information:

**Agriculture and Natural Resources:** Local farmers and ranchers are provided technical assistance and education to enhance their profitability and sustainability.

**Horticulture:** Programs are designed to meet the needs of the local lawn and landscape industry. Florida homeowners are taught to implement Florida Friendly Landscaping principles.

**Master Gardener Program:** Master Gardeners receive training in exchange for volunteer service to the community. The Master Gardeners hold a plant clinic every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM to help county residents improve landscaping and gardening skills.

**Family and Consumer Sciences:** Family and Consumer Sciences programs offer you information about health and nutrition, food safety, food preservation, money management, home concerns, relationships, and many other topics.

**Family Nutrition Program:** FNP is a program designed to increase the understanding of nutrition and health related subjects for children and adults.

**4-H Youth Development:** Through various 4-H clubs led by trained and background checked adult volunteer leaders, youth participate in a variety of programs that stress the National 4-H Mission mandates: leadership, science education, healthy lifestyles and work force preparation.

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## **Educational Display Gets Attention**

### **Paulette Tomlinson, Livestock & Natural Resources Agent II**

Almost all cow - calf producers depend on bahiagrass as their primary source of grass pasture for grazing, especially cattle producers. Columbia County has 101,451 acres of land in farms, of which 35.9% is pastureland. The county is home to approximately 33,000 cows and calves and approximately 1,800 horses, ponies and donkeys.

In recent months, it has been found that a "look alike" plant called Brunswick grass has invaded pastures or been seeded in newly established pastures in north Florida. This grass, while looking like bahiagrass, is not palatable and the last information received concerning an entire field with cattle in it for observation shows the cattle walk by Brunswick grass and will not eat it at all! Another plant of concern to all livestock own-

ers but especially horse owners is Creeping Indigo. Creeping Indigo has been linked to several equine deaths in the last few years and many others being ill.

Given this situation, the normal waning supply of grass in the fall and dry weather, prompted the designing of a standalone educational display calling attention to the Brunswick grass and how to distinguish it from Pensacola bahiagrass. The display also contained identification and control information for Creeping Indigo. The display was positioned outside the door of the Columbia Livestock Market at their annual heifer sale in October and more recently displayed at the joint meeting of the North Florida Cattlemen's and Georgia's - Wiregrass Cattlemen's Associations. Plans are to take the

display to meetings and other agricultural businesses to raise awareness of these grazing threats.

Approximately 260 individuals have been exposed to the display. One individual commented they now know how to identify the Brunswick grass and its threat to ruin bahiagrass pastures. Many who own cattle also have horses and therefore awareness of Creeping Indigo and its danger to all livestock is important. Since this display is standalone producers can look at their leisure and learn how to identify both Brunswick grass and Creeping Indigo. Awareness has been raised for livestock owners to be looking for these plants in their pastures, the loss of grass production that can occur, control methods for each plant and how they can

contact UF/IFAS Extension Columbia County personnel for verification or for more information.

