

**THE ANSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS** convened at 5:00 P.M. on Monday, September 9, 2013 at the Cooperative Extension Office, McLaurin Street, Wadesboro, North Carolina for the Annual Report to the People.

Commissioners present: Anna H. Baucom, Chair  
Ross Streater, Vice Chair  
Bobby Sikes  
Dr. Jim Sims  
Vancine Sturdivant  
Jarvis Woodburn

Staff members present: Lawrence R. Gatewood, County Manager  
Bonnie M. Huntley, CMC, NCCCC, Clerk to the Board  
Rita James, Data Processing  
Tiffany Randall, CPA, Finance Officer  
Sheriff Allen  
Major Little

Others: Scott Forbes, County Attorney

Ms. Eloise Harrington welcomed board members, Representative Brody, Senator McLaurin and others to the meeting. Ms. Harrington thanked the staff for the delicious meal and asked those present to give them a hand. Ms. Harrington then called on Janine Rywak, County Extension Director.

Ms. Rywak welcomed those present to their office stating they enjoy hosting the commissioners and glad they could get out of their stuffy old meeting room and come out in the county. Ms. Rywak shared that this would be an informal presentation and encouraged everyone to continue eating and go back for seconds. Ms. Rywak felt we were lucky to have a very active, involved and smart Cooperative Extension staff in Anson County and she was proud of every one of them. Ms. Rywak stated that she considered herself very lucky to be County Extension Director with such a fine group of people. Ms. Rywak then formally introduced her staff as follows: Dustin Adcock, newest on staff and the Area Local Foods Agent serving Union, Stanly and Anson counties and housed in Union County, Aimee Rankin, Horticulture Agent with forestry responsibilities, Roshunda Blount, 4-H and Youth Development Agent, Jessica Anderson (soon to be Morgan), Livestock Agent with row crop responsibilities, Pam Layfield, Administrative Assistant, Yolanda Mitchell, Case Manager for 4-H Youth Promise after School Program and Richard Goforth, Area Poultry Agent covering seven counties. Ms. Rywak recognized Erin Dempsey, stating she was out on maternity leave. Ms. Rywak noted one thing that came out of their staff development day this summer was that sometimes they do good work, good programs and good reporting but sometimes they

don't always get the point across as to why they actually do what they do. Ms. Rywak explained that all programs were issue based and in response to a need in the county. Ms. Rywak stated that the role of their advisory folks is to tell them what they need to be doing and they respond to those needs and issues. Ms. Rywak noted that tonight in their presentations they will give you a snippet of one of the things they do and why we do what we do.

Aimee Rankin: Ms. Rankin stated that her areas of responsibility included commercial and consumer horticulture, local foods, forestry, natural resources and beekeeping. Ms. Rankin reported nearly 2000 client contacts since last year. Ms. Rankin shared that consumer horticulture constitutes her greatest number of client contacts. Ms. Rankin stated that some of the consumer horticulture clients she has assisted include homeowners, agencies, schools, local government and area businesses. Ms. Rankin reported that a recent gardening trends research report surveyed 83 million people and found that 61% of U. S. households planned to grow a food or landscape garden in 2011, with the recent recession being a motivator for 34% of households. Ms. Rankin stated that Americans are recognizing the potential benefits of improved quality, taste and cost savings through maintaining their own gardens. Ms. Rankin added that gardening, which falls under consumer horticulture, continues to be one of American's most popular hobbies. Ms. Rankin noted that in order for her programs to remain relevant to the community, it is important for her to stay current on client trends and interests by doing outreach to a variety of groups, staying in contact with her advisory board members and listening to the questions and conversations people have about consumer horticulture. Ms. Rankin assisted 6 groups at Anson New Tech's Agricultural School Wide Project, has been a guest lecturer at all of Anson County's schools as well as assisted living facilities, churches, community centers, civic groups, summer camps and the community college, to name a few. Other recent examples of assistance she has provided include consultation with Partnership for Children on their community garden, Anson Community Hospital's Serenity Garden, consultation of landscaping around the courthouse and the Emergency Services building, a rain garden for Anson Parks and Rec. and lessons on fruit tree care to the Town of Peachland. In the nearly 7 years she has been with Anson Cooperative Extension she has met and established great relationships with their consumer horticulture clients, most of whom they know on a first name basis and it is gratifying to hear back about their successes in adopting sustainable practices that incorporate cost savings, practices that are environmentally sound and socially acceptable. Ms. Rankin feels Anson Cooperative Extension is in a unique position to provide one-on-one and group education to a broad range of audiences throughout the community and they often partner with other agencies to accomplish shared goals. Ms. Rankin voiced appreciation for the continued support the commissioners and the community have given their agency and staff.

Roshunda Blount, 4-H Agent for Anson County. Ms. Blount shared that all of us fall on bad times at some point and some individuals are able to recover and prosper

while others are still stuck in the rut of recession, unemployment and financial stress. Ms. Blount stated that the youth in this environment suffer as well as the adults. Ms. Blount shared that research shows that hungry children have poor mental and overall health, miss more days of school, suffer greater rate of behavioral disorders and are less prepared to learn when they are in school. Ms. Blount stated that there were currently 22% of children living below the poverty level in the nation, 24% of children living below the poverty level in North Carolina and a whopping 36.4% of youth living below the poverty level in Anson County. Ms. Blount reported that Anson County 4-H has always done county-wide community service programs that centered on youth and their wellbeing. Ms. Blount shared that when discussed with specialized committee members they identified the issue of children going without food over the weekend and during the summer and the idea of helping a school with a small scale feeding program came into works. Ms. Blount stated that after searching around for an elementary school in need of help, Wadesboro Elementary was the only one in the county that at that time that no one was helping with the feeding program. Ms. Blount stated that after talking with the school social worker back pack buddies was formed. Ms. Blount explained that this program provides children with food in secure homes with weekend meals during the school year. Ms. Blount noted that Anson County 4-H collects and packs bags with kid friendly nutritious self-serve food. Ms. Blount stated that the children receive a back pack containing food items on Friday to sustain them through Monday when they return to school. Ms. Blount shared that the food supply was solely by donations from 4-Hers, parents, 4-H volunteer leaders and county government. Ms. Blount added that some organizations and individual donations have also been made. Ms. Blount expressed that 100% of donations go toward the children. Ms. Blount stated that 4-H Youth Promise Community Service and Restitution youth or 4-H staff members do packing weekly. Ms. Blount shared that since 2011 over 5,280 packs of food have been given to a total of 33 students that receive their backpacks from Anson County 4-H. Ms. Blount shared that the 4-H motto was to make the best better and by continuing this program Anson County 4-H is working on improving the livelihood, wellbeing and development of a child and their families by helping them during their hardship.

Jessica Anderson, the Livestock and Row Crops Agent, also covers pesticide education as well as animal waste operator education. Ms. Anderson's topic tonight was the state graded feeder calf sales in cooperation with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture as well as the local livestock yards in the area. Ms. Anderson shared even when she was growing up when you needed some money and you had cows in the field, you rounded up a calf and took it to the weekly sale and you got a little extra money. Ms. Anderson stated that they started to realize that most of our operations in North Carolina and the south are cow-calf operations, which means that most farmers in the area have brood cows and how you make a product off them is they have a calf every year and you sell that calf and get your money. Ms. Anderson stated that they realized to get the calves from North Carolina to the Midwest where they were putting feedlots was a long trip and feedlots don't want to pay good money

to get 6 calves they might buy at one weekly sale all the way out to Nebraska. Ms. Anderson stated that the state and the local stockyards started having special sales during the summer so you could bring your calves and they actually group all the calves that look alike together and you make one truck load to the Midwest instead of selling a couple at a time. Ms. Anderson explained that Extension's role in this is education, letting people know about the sales and also what they need to do to be a part of the sales. Ms. Anderson stated that this includes basic beef cattle management practices to include castrating and beef horning of calves, proper vaccinations and having an actual calving season so all your calves calf at the same time. Ms. Anderson shared that she does this in conjunction with the Stanly County Livestock market and they have sales in March, June, July, August and September. Ms. Anderson stated that the producers that really take time with their calves and go that one extra step forward is the beef quality assurance program. Ms. Anderson noted that the National Cattleman's Beef Association started this program in the 70's and it is to reward good producers for their management practices. Ms. Anderson shared that this includes a good set of vaccination schedules that includes several rounds of vaccinations, safe handling practices and good management techniques. Ms. Anderson stated that producers have to sit through a course, take an exam and get recertified every two years. This insures that the cattle from these farms are a step above the rest. Ms. Anderson noted this means more money and the buyers from the feedlots in the Midwest are looking for these cattle that have this extra mark on them that says this producer actually put time and effort into this project. Ms. Anderson stated that Anson County currently ranks 37<sup>th</sup> in beef cattle production out of 100 counties but we also rank 4<sup>th</sup> when we look specifically at Tier 1 counties. Ms. Anderson noted we were the only one in the southern piedmont region so that means that cattle in Anson County has been getting this 20-cent premium a pound on their cattle because the producers have been participating in the programs. Ms. Anderson stated that we've had over 50 producers participate in the program so far this year and they have one more sale coming up on Thursday.

Dustin Adcock, local foods and horticulture agent for Anson, Stanly and Union counties, shared that he has been working on two major programs. Mr. Adcock stated that when he first got involved with local foods his concern was that the small farms tend to work independently more than they did as a group. Mr. Adcock stated that their main project is Farm Fresh Ventures which is a cooperative put together and solely owned by the farmers. Mr. Adcock shared that all they have done is instigate this and prod the group along and they ended up packing close to 1400 boxes of food that was all presold and generated over \$32,000 of income for the six counties involved. Mr. Adcock stated that they had 10 total producers. Mr. Adcock shared that in talking to the farmers he's noticed that the producers have learned to fill the gaps for each other. Mr. Adcock shared that they have helped them to understand a fair and constant price, which was always an issue as it is hard to explain how to price produce because it changes so much throughout the season. Mr. Adcock shared that they also allowed them to understand what it means to pull a group together and build a business. Mr.

Adcock mentioned their next meeting was tomorrow night and that will determine what it looks like next year. Mr. Adcock stated that they had lower number of sales but they had a greater projection and a better black line in the end. Mr. Adcock stated that he put together a group called Rocky River Local Foods and this is where he went on his own to try and target the issue of people not wanting to work together and allow farmers to cooperatively join together to find success in their own way. Mr. Adcock brought together the three counties he works for and developed an advisory group. Mr. Adcock stated that his main goal was to brand our local foods to provide bumper stickers, window decals for restaurants that purchase the local foods, stickers for products and yard signs for the farms. Mr. Adcock stated that while in the early stages the three counties have come together and learned about producers they did not know existed and came up with their own marketing plan. Mr. Adcock shared that one area they felt was not being tapped in our area was the restaurant and retailers don't have access to consistent local food sources. Mr. Adcock stated that they developed a website and a hub where all the farmers can post all their crops and products at one time and now the restaurant owners can go on with a credit card and purchase directly to that farm. Mr. Adcock stated that they brought three counties together, built a stronger local food community and they've actually been getting together to build fences and other things together. Mr. Adcock was hopeful that in the next month restaurants will start purchasing from them.

Richard Goforth, Area Poultry Agent serving seven counties and housed in Union County, deals with poultry issues both commercial large poultry and small backyard flock owners. Mr. Goforth presented his poultry litter nutrient management program, noting this was working with growers to help them use their litter appropriately. Mr. Goforth stated that Senate Bill 1217 enacted rules developed by a blue ribbon study commission on agriculture waste and these laws and rules are encoded in Section 15A of the North Carolina Administrative Code. Mr. Goforth stated that this outlines the requirements for waste planning and record keeping and both of these laws are direct results of the Federal Clean Water Act and the North Carolina Water Quality Standards laws. Mr. Goforth stated that some of the things required of local producers is to keep track of amounts and dates of their litter that is removed from their farms, keep contact info for the person that applies the litter, have a plan that estimates the amount of litter that their farm will produce, have a waste analysis done of the litter, have proper storage and stockpiling of litter and soil testing. Mr. Goforth noted a good thing about using litter and using it properly is you are using a byproduct. Mr. Goforth stated that if used properly the litter is an excellent fertilizer source and it provides some things synthetic fertilizers can't give us in addition to the nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium that is normally in a fertilizer and it provides organic matter that helps build the soil. Mr. Goforth shared that Anson County may jump up in the poultry production rankings as currently he has request to do plans for five new farms in the county with about fifty-four new poultry houses to be built mostly in the Morven area. Mr. Goforth feels that by this time next year we may be in fourth place as a county in production.

Yolanda Mitchell, case manager for 4-H Youth Promise, explained that 4-H Youth Promise was the only program in Anson County that has a Community Service and Restitution component to it. Mrs. Mitchell explained that the Community Service and Restitution component provides the opportunity for each participant to be held accountable for their actions. Mrs. Mitchell stated that they are held accountable by completing their assigned community service hours. Mrs. Mitchell stated that upon completing their hours, if restitution is owed to a victim they are able to receive a check for the amount of damage that was caused by their participant. Mrs. Mitchell feels this not only helps the youth but it also helps the parent and teaches the child a hard form of responsibility. Mrs. Mitchell shared that as years pass they have seen the community service restitution component's measurable objective percentages rise higher than the state's mandated average, so 4-H Youth Promise has added several community service outreach projects within their After School component as well. Mrs. Mitchell stated that by doing so, all participants are involved and are actively learning to give back to their community. Mr. Mitchell noted that on top of all that, their participants learn by doing from their community service worksites. Each worksite provides the opportunity for a participant to learn more skills, show off the skills they already possess and creates the option for future growth such as job preparation. Mrs. Mitchell stated that this summer Anson County schools were their worksites. Mrs. Mitchell noted that each participant worked closely with the janitorial staff to help prepare each school for the upcoming school year. Ms. Mitchell noted that not only was the staff appreciative of the effort, but also spoke highly of each participant's willingness to help them. Mrs. Mitchell stated that by using various worksites and doing helpful projects it shines a positive light on the program and county as a whole. Mrs. Mitchell shared that 4-H Youth Promise actions have spoken louder than their words and that is a direct reflection of the youth they work with.

Ms. Rywak thanked Representative Brody and Senator McLaurin for being here tonight and also their District Director Mr. McRae. Representative Brody asked if there was enough farmland to absorb all the litter that will be produced with the answer being yes. Mr. Goforth felt most would be third party and that is where crop producers may or may not have poultry litter taken but as part of their planning they sign an agreement with the poultry producer outlining the basic rules and their agreement to follow the rules. Representative Brody asked if that then becomes a commodity that has to be bought and sold if it was something you say thanks for taking it. Mr. Goforth answered that in the last five to six years it has become a hot commodity as oil prices went up. Mr. Goforth stated that poultry litter went from something I need to get rid of to now can I make a little money. Commissioner Sturdivant asked about the farms coming to Morven proposing fifty-four houses and if the litter has an odor to it. Mr. Goforth answered that the smell from the houses was usually minimal and because it is such a dry product the potential for spill and runoff is much greater because it is stored outdoors continuously. Mr. Goforth stated that most time the odor is minimal except for when it is spread on fields. Ms. Anderson stated that just because the fifty-four houses are in Morven that doesn't mean those are the only fields that get poultry litter

on them. Ms. Anderson shared that fields all over the county use poultry litter. County Attorney Forbes asked if there were any plans to help farmers who have older outdated farms that don't meet the standards set by producers. Mr. Goforth answered that unfortunately that was an issue and was really more a supply and demand. Mr. Goforth stated that many times growers get upset when their houses are closed out but those houses were only meant to have a fifteen to twenty year lifespan when built. Mr. Goforth added that they like to hold on to them because when they are paid off they make a lot more money. County Attorney Forbes wondered if there were any programs to up fit or destroy with Mr. Goforth answering when they look at doing serious modifications the amount of money it takes to bring them up to standard is more than just tearing them down. Mr. Goforth added that they can still use the pad, they have the plumbing and utilities so they have a lot of the base cost covered. Senator McLaurin commented that the staff did a great job and it was obvious there was a lot of enthusiasm. Senator McLaurin stated that it was awfully good for them to come and see the partnership they have in state government with local county officials and felt this was something that needed to be continued and expanded on. Senator McLaurin then asked for the recipe for the peach cobbler.

Ms. Rywak then called on Chairman Baucom for closing remarks. Chairman Baucom felt the discussion on poultry litter management would serve Senator McLaurin and Representative Brody well when they go back to Raleigh. Chairman Baucom voiced that they were delighted to have them here and extended a special welcome to Senator McLaurin's assistant Katie. Chairman Baucom stated that these two gentlemen have stood up for Anson County. Chairman Baucom voiced appreciation for them standing with Anson County and for being here tonight. Chairman Baucom stated that she knows the staff means a lot to the people they serve here in the county and thanked them for all they do.

Respectfully submitted:

Bonnie M. Huntley, CMC, NCCCC  
Clerk to the Board

Meeting time: 45 minutes