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Extension Notes - Reasons to Buy Local

Anson County farmers are dedicated and committed to their work. And while they love what they do, they are not doing it for entertainment. They need to make a living. Consumers who value fresh food and a working landscape should support local farmers by buying their products. Here are some reasons why.

- Locally grown food tastes and looks better. The crops are picked at their peak. The shorter the time between the farm and your table, the less likely it is that nutrients will be lost from fresh food. Food imported from far away is older and has traveled on trucks or planes, and sat in warehouses before it gets to you.
- Local food preserves genetic diversity. In the modern agricultural system, plant varieties are chosen for their ability to ripen uniformly, withstand harvesting, survive packing and last a long time on the shelf. Smaller local farms, in contrast, often grow many different varieties of crops to provide a long harvest season, an array of colors, and the best flavors.
- Local food is safe. There is a unique kind of assurance that comes from looking a farmer in the eye at farmers' market or driving by the fields where your food comes from. Local farmers are not anonymous and they take their responsibility to the consumer seriously.
- Local food supports local families. The wholesale prices that farmers get for their products are low, often near the cost of production. Local farmers who sell direct to consumers cut out the middleman and get full retail price for their food, which helps farm families stay on the land.
- Local food builds community. When you buy direct from a farmer, you are engaging in a time-honored connection between eater and grower. Knowing farmers gives you insight into the seasons, the land, and your food.
- Local food preserves open space. When farmers get paid more for their products by marketing locally, they are less likely to sell farmland for development. When you buy locally grown food, you are doing something proactive to preserve our working landscape. That landscape is an essential ingredient to other economic activity in the state, such as tourism and recreation.
- Local food keeps taxes down. According to several studies by the American Farmland Trust, farms contribute more in taxes than they require in services. Cows do not go to school, tomatoes do not dial 911.
- Local food benefits the environment and wildlife. Well-managed farms provide ecosystem services. They conserve fertile soil and protect water sources. The farm environment is a patchwork of fields, woods and ponds that provide habitat for wildlife in our communities.
- Local food is an investment in the future. By supporting local farmers today, you are helping to ensure that there will be farms in your community tomorrow.

By Janine B. Rywak, County Extension Director



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AMS Students to Travel to Florida

M. Jaynes and C. Allen of Anson Middle School submitted this release: Career exploration is an ideal concept to present to middle school students. They are at a critical age where they are inquisitive and they are highly interested in learning about making connections between what they are learning in school with the "real world." They want to know how the concepts they are learning are relevant to their lives now and in the future. Anson Middle School community has taken an active role to make this become a realization.

Over the spring break (April 3rd to April 7th); Anson Middle School's Honor Society and Career Club members with several chaperones will be traveling to Orlando, Florida to participate in two educational programs from Disney's Youth Education Series. These programs will allow them to explore first-hand the relative relationship between conservation of land and wildlife with humans and the impacts of technology and culture on the Earth's global community. The educational programs will be held at one of the Disney Theme Parks.

During their adventure, Anson School students will be attending the Y.E.S program entitled, Sustainable Practices in Wildlife Conservation. According to Sustainable Practices in Wildlife Conservation's website, students participating in this program will discover how people and animals are all connected and how each uniquely responds to environmental challenges. They will examine different perspectives on conservation and how these might impact decision-making. A part of their educational adventure, students will be expected to work collaboratively to apply their newly-gained knowledge and insights to create an effective conservation action plan for a community that resembles some of the lands found within Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park. The importance of the teamwork is reinforced as an essential tool in conservation, as well as every-day life.

Students will also attend the Introduction to Global Citizenship program. This program has been designed to help students discover how technology, communication and commerce help bridge cultural gaps around the world. This understanding is developed, strengthened and reinforced as students navigate through the various displays and sections found within the international pavilions of Epcot World Showcase. Attending these cultural pavilions will help students to explore the cultures of several nations represented within Epcot's Showcase, where they will interact with international ambassadors to gain an understanding of how technology, communication, and commerce bridge cultural gaps. From their experiences, students should realize that while cultures vary, people across the globe are united in one global community. More information regarding this educational program can be found on the Internet, using Introduction to Global Citizenship as the key phrase.

When students are not attending the Y.E.S program workshops, they will have the opportunity to explore the various Disney Theme Parks. Students are allowed to go to a Disney water park, either Typhoon Lagoon or Blizzard Beach.

This educational trip would not have happened without the forethought, organization and help from prominent people within the Anson County School community. It initiated with Ms. Chandra Allen, who wanted to provide Anson Middle School students with a fun yet educational trip that they would never forget. She began the leg-work to organize the trip, finding and tallying up the cost for travel, hotel stay, and registration for programs, etc. Students and chaperones will be staying at the Animal Kingdom Lodge and flying to Florida with Southwest Airlines.

However, the planning and preparation for the trip did not stop there. To offset the overall price of the trip (per person), parents of several Anson Middle School students volunteered to assist in hosting and sponsoring several fundraisers, which included two bake sales, chicken plate fundraiser and a dance. In addition to these fundraisers, the school received many donations from local businesses, a school administrator (Dr. J. Allen), and two grants (Smith Trust and Little Foundation).

Anson Middle School's Honor Society and Career Club members want to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Chandra Allen, Patricia Sikes, Kelly Morgan, Lynn Whitlock, Setrina Byrd, other local businesses, Dr. Allen, and Smith Trust and Little Foundation organizations for the contributions they have made to make this trip happen. AMS students are anxiously looking forward to traveling to Florida and participating in the Y.E.S programs.

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Wingate University Speaker Saving Lives 'One Bar of Soap at a Time'

Derreck Kayongo was 10 years old when his family fled the civil war in Uganda for a better life in America. He became a visionary problem solver who never forgot the squalid refugee camps where he spent his childhood. Kayongo will share his journey from child refugee to energetic entrepreneur in a speech at Wingate University on Wednesday, March 25. Kayongo's presentation, "Tapping your Power to Create Social Change," is free to the public and begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Batte Center.

In 2009, Kayongo and his wife founded the Global Soap Project. The organization receives donations of partially-used soap from more than 1500 hotels in the U.S., including 13 hotels in the Charlotte area. The harvested soap is melted, purified and reprocessed into 30,000 new bars of soap each week. The Global Soap Project has given more than 2 million bars of soap to people in more than 30 countries on four continents. The group also teaches proper hand-washing and hygiene to the people it serves.

An estimated 2.4 million deaths worldwide could be prevented each year by hand-washing with soap. Most of those who die from hygiene-related diseases are children.

Honored as a CNN "Top Ten Hero," Kayongo is a compelling motivational speaker. He draws on his personal hardships and life lessons, hoping to inspire others to overcome obstacles to solve persistent problems.

Information on the Global Soap Project, including a list of participating hotels, is available at www.globalsoap.org.

Red Cross Blood Drive is March 24

The American Red Cross' Wadesboro Community Blood Drive will take place on Tuesday, March 24, from 1:30 until 6 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Wadesboro. To schedule a life-saving appointment, please visit redcrossblood.org and enter the Sponsor Code: Wadesboro Community.

Operation Medicine Drop is Saturday

The Anson County Sheriff's Office and Anson County Partnership for Children will be holding Operation Medicine Drop on Saturday March 21, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Wadesboro Food Lion.