Calendar
If you have an event you would like added to the calendar please send it to rlong2@clemson.edu

MARCH
6: State Dairy Judging and Dairy Foods Contests
7: Spring Dairy Show

APRIL
4: State Livestock Judging Contest
11: State Poultry Judging Contest
18: Dairy Heifer Project Kick-Off

MAY
1: Meat Goat Project applications due
16: Meat Goat Project Pre Kick-Off Clinic

JUNE
13: Meat Goat Project Kick-Off

JULY
12-16: Southeast Dairy Youth Retreat

Keep it simple…
As I write this Clemson Main Campus is closed today due to inclement weather. An unexpected bonus to this crazy weather. It gives me the opportunity to spend a little extra time at the barn doing morning chores. There’s nothing quite like morning at the barn. This morning I scratched ears a little more and cuddled the barn kittens a little more, and even gave the cows a little extra hay (it is cold out). All in all it’s a great way to start the day.

Which brings me to my point, why do you enroll kids in a livestock project? Speaking from my own experience as a youth, it doesn’t matter how many ribbons are on the wall or even what color they are because at the end of the day, what those kids are going to remember, what I remember, are mornings like today. Those moments of quiet. Those moments where time stops and everything is at peace. Animals teach us so many things but what we could use more of in life is simplicity. A life not measured in ribbons but in quiet acceptance of a job well done.

So as deadlines are approaching and youth get signed up for animal projects remember the simple things are what impact us the most.

Southeast Dairy Youth Retreat
The Southeast Dairy Youth Retreat is a 4 night adventure for youth ages 9 to 19 years of age, along with parents and dairy youth program volunteers. Held each year in one of the seven participating states (Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee and Kentucky), the retreat is a fun, educational and social event that is a unique experience every year! This year the Retreat will be held in South Carolina!

Focusing on a variety of dairy topics, the trip provides the youth with the opportunity to visit various dairy farms throughout the state, attend workshops taught by industry professionals, visit local attractions unique to the state, and form lasting friendships with youth from different states.

Date: July 12-16
Cost: $175 per person
Base: Newberry, SC
More information: http://tinyurl.com/2015sedyr
Dairy Program

Dairy Heifer Project:
Applications for the 2015-2016 Project were due last Friday. We have 32 applicants this year! That is great, thanks for spreading the word about this amazing project! Now the hard work begins...finding great heifers for you all to raise! If anyone is interested in providing heifers to the project please let me know ASAP!

Kick-Off is scheduled for April 18th at the Saluda County Fairgrounds. Project applicants will receive more information on this soon.

Current project members, keep working on getting your heifers bred if they are not already. Once your heifer is bred PLEASE document the sire name, registration number, bull ID (or code), type of service (AI or pasture bred) and breeding date or dates. This information will need to be reported to me later this summer.

Dairy Contests:
Registration for Dairy Judging and Milk Quality & Products Contests is due March 4th! If you are planning on competing in this event please get your registration in ASAP!!

Swine Program

Barrow Project:
Applications for the Barrow Project will be available by April 15th, applications will be due around June 15th and weigh-in will be July 1st - 15th. Watch the website and email updates for information about this project.

Added to the website is a handout titled “So you want to raise market swine?” This handout is a discussion tool for youth and their families interested in raising a market swine project for the first time. Read it or pass it along to anyone inquiring about this swine project.

Beef Program

Beef Projects:
There are big changes for the beef program coming. We will not be taking registrations for a state level market steer project for 2015. Youth can still raise steers as county projects and will need to coordinate with their local 4-H agents and ag teachers about completing projects.

We hope to announce the 2016 state beef projects this summer, as soon as details are worked out.
Goat Program

**Meat Goat Project:**
Applications are available on the website. They are due May 1st. Cost of a goat this year is $125.

Kick-Off is scheduled for June 13th. The location is being discussed as the Newberry Fairgrounds are not available this year. More information about the location will be provided as soon as it is determined.

**2015 Project Shirts**

Anyone enrolling in the project should plan now to attend the Pre Kick-Off Clinic scheduled for May 16th from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. Location to be determined.

**SC Show Calendar**

We have added a web page for the yearly show calendar for South Carolina shows as well as shows in the region that may be of interest to our youth. This page will be updated with information as soon as it is received. Please send me dates and details as soon as you have them.

Check this page often and send in any show opportunities that should be advertised to South Carolina youth.

**Jr. Beef Round-Up**

One of the greatest things about the South Carolina Jr. Beef Round-Up is the people that ensure its success every year. You could be a part of a very special group that is dedicated to the future well-being of our beef cattle industry.

We have several openings on our committee to help with specific events and activities. If you might be interested in working with the committee to ensure the continued success of Round-Up please contact me!

Round-Up exhibitors should be studying now for the Cattlemen’s Contest! Our Facebook page is posting a “question of the week” each week in order to give you topics to learn about each week. Like us on Facebook to stay up to date on our latest question!

**Upcoming Workshops**

**Backyard Poultry Workshop**

Date: April 10, 2015
10:00 am – 4:30 pm
Spartanburg Community College
Spartanburg, SC
Fee: $70

The program will cover several important aspects of poultry production. **Topics to be covered include:** Getting started, feeding and nutrition, housing (mobile vs. permanent), breed selection (egg vs. meat), reproduction, introduction to disease prevention, pastured poultry

Contact: Local Extension Office or call (864) 489-3141 ext 113

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Learning Activity Ideas

Create a 2D model of a ruminant digestive system using creative materials (clay, moldable sand, pipe cleaners, etc.)

Have youth (individually or in pairs) create a “travel guide” of the digestive tract. Should include: picture of each location, physical description of each location, creative explanation of interesting features, tour options, restaurants, etc. for each location.

Have youth use different color crayons to trace the path of food through the digestive system. You can do an internet search for an Ag in the Classroom activity called Chew it Twice for worksheets and instructions.

A Little About Livestock

What’s in a Rumen?
Do you know what a ruminant is? A ruminant is an animal that has 4 compartments to their stomach whereas an animal with a one compartment stomach is called a monogastric. The 4 parts of a ruminant's stomach are called the rumen, reticulum, omasum, and abomasum. So what's in a rumen? Billions of tiny microorganisms that break down grass and other vegetation. Each of the 4 compartments have a specific job to do which allows these animals to process and utilize plants as food that monogastrics could not. Over 50% of the energy in cereal crops that are grown for food is inedible to humans. Ruminants have the ability to convert these things into high quality protein in the form of meat and milk.

You can see how very different the digestive tracts are in a dairy cow (ruminant) versus a human (monogastric) using the two graphics below. Can you name some other ruminant animals besides cattle, sheep, and goats? Can you name some other monogastrics besides humans?

What else makes a ruminant special? As a ruminant animal eats, they do not completely chew their food. They partially chew their food, swallow it, it passes into the rumen when it is broken down into balls or a "cud." While a ruminant is resting it will regurgitate its "cud" and continue chewing its cud. The next time it is swallowed it will pass through the entire digestive process. This process stems from ruminant animals being prey animals. They eat as much as they can to fill their rumen, usually out in the open, then when they are in the safety of the shade trees and groups, they will rest and "chew their cud" preparing their food to pass through the rest of their digestion process.

Further Learning
How much can each compartment of a ruminant's stomach hold? How big is a human's stomach? Why can cows eat grass?