

Corn production meeting a major benefit to local farmers

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Melissa Mattee hosted the Northeast Georgia Corn Production Meeting last month at the Georgia Mountain Experiment Station, an event which was well attended by farmers from both Union and Towns counties.

Mattee came on board as the UGA extension agent for Union and Towns back in January, and since then she's fully embraced her educational mission as a No. 1 resource for those who would learn.

The corn production meeting brought in experts from the University of Georgia, who spoke to area corn growers about best corn production practices, as well as pest and disease management.

"Essentially what we wanted to accomplish was to have a meeting to give corn growers, or people looking to grow corn, the knowledge that they needed to combat issues coming up," said Mattee. "For instance, there have been a lot of issues with pesticide changes because of the concern with pollinators."

Dr. David Buntin, a UGA professor of entomology, discussed pest management and changes to certain legislation regarding the use of pesticides, and Dr. Dewey Lee, a retired UGA professor and extension agronomist, gave general advice on growing corn, as well as specifics on what stages of plant growth to start treating for disease.

Jack Christian, with WinField, spoke on behalf of meeting sponsor Southeastern Farmers Co-Op, and he demonstrated a product called InterLock, designed to maximize spray deposition and reduce spray drift.

For Mattee, an insect expert by trade, the big takeaway from the meeting was this – get in your field.

"A lot of people will plant the corn, and they figure, 'oh, it'll be fine,' and they don't scout very much," said Mattee. "They don't go out and look for weed problems regularly, they don't look for bug problems, they don't keep an eye on fungus. So you need to be out there every week, looking at your corn and checking on your corn, just walking the rows."

Happy, healthy corn requires diligence on the grower's part, said Mattee, as leaves, stalks, and soil should be checked regularly in order to address minor problems as they arise, before they can become major problems.

Lee Knight of Lee Knight Farm – a regular attendee of meetings organized by UGA



Jack Christian of WinField gives a live demonstration of a product for local farmers following the Northeast Georgia Corn Production Meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 16



In the NE GA Corn Production Meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 16, County Ag Agent Melissa Mattee reminds those in attendance that her office collects and tests soil samples as a service to residents in Union and Towns counties

extension – said he always learns something new each and every time he attends.

"I found out a little more about some herbicide information," said Knight, adding that he would recommend extension information meetings to fellow farmers. "Take advantage of our experts from the University of Georgia, for one thing, like Dewey Lee, who comes up here all the way up from Tifton. He's probably the most knowledgeable person I know on corn, and so we've got the advantage of that information and knowledge in these meetings."

GMREC Superintendent Ray Covington helped to organize the corn production meeting, calling on University of Georgia colleagues to make the trip up to Union County.

"Today I think farmers were kind of exposed to the risks of this changing climate, and they could go ahead and be pre-thinking problems with the El Nino pattern that we're seeing with our climate," said Covington. "This is an

irregular winter, we can expect an irregular summer, and for them, if they aren't proactive, they could lose a lot of crop, and I think today they got some strategies to help them."

According to University of Georgia research, the best time to plant corn is when the temperature and moisture become favorable for seed germination and seedling growth – soil temperature in the seed zone should be 55 degrees Fahrenheit or higher before planting.

Planting should be delayed, however, if cold weather drops soil temperatures below 55 degrees at the 2-inch level, though if soil temps are 55 and higher, and if weather projections show a warming trend, go ahead and plant the corn.

The next extension program will take place on March 21, at which time local farmers will be able to learn all about high tunnels, and how high tunnels can help them in their fields.

superintendent roles – he and his family were ready to move to a place they have both loved visiting over the years and could see themselves ending up for keeps.

On top of living in the North Georgia Mountains, Union County Schools offered an additional draw for Rayfield, in that the school system received high marks in so many different areas – from student performance to the system's strong financial situation.

Rayfield earned his bachelor's degree in agricultural education from Auburn University in 1988, his master's degree in the same from the University of Georgia in 1993, and his Doctor of Education from Oklahoma State University in agricultural education with an area of specialization in educational administration, all in 1995.

His extensive background in agricultural education will fit nicely within a community that considers agriculture and the schools' FFA programs of high importance within the county, according to the board.

Prior to serving in Decatur County, Rayfield served as superintendent of Cook County School System for seven years.

Rayfield was also CTAE director for Cook County Schools, as well as an assistant principal there, and he worked for the Georgia Department of Education as a regional education specialist from 1998 until 2002.

He has been a high school teacher, a cooperative extension educator in both Georgia and Oklahoma, and an assistant professor at OSU.

Steppe announced his retirement in early November, and the search for his replacement began shortly thereafter.

ArtWorks classes offered in March

Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild is pleased to announce the March adult classes at its ArtWorks Artisan Centre in Hiwassee. Class size is limited, insuring individualized instruction. The classes include oil and acrylic painting, watercolor painting and glass painting.

Full course descriptions can be found on the "Classes" page of the guild website, www.artguildstore.com.

Paula Canup's class "Painting with Paula" meets on the 15th; "Wine, Women and Watercolor" is offered on the 5th and 26th with Joyce Clair; Joyce continues her series "Watercolor for Beginners" (the third class) on the 12th; Barbara Keyes will present "Glass Painting Basics" on the 19th.

Please check our website for more classes that may be added during the month.

For additional information on any of these classes and to sign up for any workshop, please visit ArtWorks in Hiwassee or call the store at 706-896-0932 and register using a credit card. Class fees are due at registration. ArtWorks is located at 232B Chatuge Way in the Hiwassee Business Center and is open Monday through Saturday from 10 to 5. NT(Mar2,Z1)CA

Appalachian Duplicate Bridge Club news

On Monday, February 22, five and one half tables of the Appalachian Duplicate Bridge Club played a Howell movement at All Saints Lutheran Church in Blairsville, GA with the following results: First, Ray Ferree and Jim Bell; second Dee Short and Dorothy Smith; third, Bobbie Mace and Joyce Geiger; fourth, Ray Berry and Joe Wald; and fifth, Karen Miller and Susan Palmich.

On Thursday, February 25, five full tables were in play on this snowy day. Again, the Howell movement was in use. First place honors went to Joan and Joe Lane. They were followed by Susan Palmich and Marcia Schultz in second. Sue Wall and Tim Schoen finished third and Myran Ponkauskas and Ray Ferree came in third.

The group plays every Monday and Thursday at All Saints beginning at 1 p.m. and would welcome any interested bridge players to join them. If you would be interested, call Susan at 706-379-9686 for more details. N(Mar2,A3)gg

Upcoming Seabee Ball

On March 5, 2016 Navy Seabee Veterans of America Island X-3 Blairsville, GA will hold an Anniversary Ball in recognition of the 74th Birthday of the U.S. Navy Seabees. The Island would like to invite you to help us celebrate the Seabee Birthday. The Ball will be held at the Union County Community Center. All information and tickets can be purchased by contacting: Bob Ramay at (706) 781-2536 or email: bobramay@windstream.net ... only 150 tickets are available. Come help celebrate the Seabee Birthday. NT(Mar2,Z1)CA

Alcoholics Anonymous meetings/times

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope, in order to solve their common problem and help others to recover from Alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

Blairsville: Mountain Presbyterian Church, 2945 Hwy 76, Monday 8 PM, open meeting Wednesday 7 PM, open meeting, Saturday 8 AM, open meeting St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Hwy 76 next to Presbyterian Church, Tuesday 7 PM, Ladies Meeting, Wednesday noon, open meeting.

Young Harris: Sharp Memorial Methodist Church on College Campus, Tuesday 7 PM, Men's Meeting, Thursday 7 PM, open meeting.

For more meeting info, call 828-837-4440. NT(Mar2,Z1)CA

Narcotics Anonymous

A new NA group called "One Is Too Many" has started meeting in Young Harris at Sharp Memorial Methodist Church. Meetings are being held every Wednesday evening at 6 p.m. The church is on campus and the meeting entrance is through the back door.

For further questions about Narcotics Anonymous please call the NA Help Line at 706-974-9990. N(Mar2,Z1)CA

Ken and Mary Manwaring Celebrate 50th Anniversary



Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Lee Manwaring celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with family in Asheville, NC on February 20, 2016. Mary and Ken were married February 18, 1966 at the First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, CA. Mary is a retired RN from Duke Medical Center, Durham, NC, and Ken is retired from Human Resources, UNC, Chapel Hill, NC. They now reside in Hiwassee, GA.

Birth Announcement



Alissa Faith White

Mr. and Mrs. Brody White are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Alissa Faith White, on February 21, 2016 at Union General Hospital delivered by Kevin Davis, M.D. Alissa weighed 7 pounds 11 ounces and she was 19 inches long. Mrs. White is the former Kelli Holcomb. N(Mar3,Z2)CA

Birth Announcement



Cole Blake Lee

Frances Luciani and Tyler Lee are proud to announce the birth of their son, Cole Blake Lee, on February 23, 2016 at Union General Hospital delivered by William Breedlove, M.D. Cole weighed 8 pounds, 15 ounces and he was 21 inches long. N(Mar2,Z1)CA

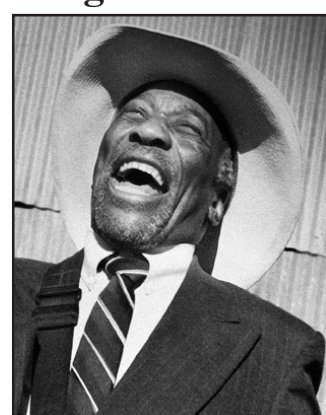
So. Appalachian Modern Quilt Guild meeting

Come join us on the second Thursday of each month, 6 p.m. at Bless My Stitches quilt shop in Murphy, NC. Our guild serves the tri-state area of Western North Carolina,

North Georgia and Eastern Tennessee. Come explore new ways to create modern quilts! Questions call Pam Howard – 828-835-6025. N(Mar2,Z1)CA

Mac Arnold is selling out at the Peacock Performing Art Center

Don't miss out on this old school blues band, purchase tickets for Mac Arnold and a Plate Full O' Blues at the Peacock Performing Arts Center in Hayesville, NC on March 12th at 7 p.m. His music will make you move and feel at the same time. He sold out last year at the Peacock and is on his way to repeat this year! Mac Arnold has played with legendary blues artists like Muddy Waters; he also has worked with The Temptations and BB King.



Mac Arnold

Mac now serves up a mess of Blues with his own band "Mac Arnold & Plate Full O' Blues" and in his own restaurant in Greenville, SC. The band has Austin Brashier on guitar and vocals, Max Hightower on keyboards, harmonica, guitar, bass and vocals, Tex Sherard on drums and vocals and, of course, Mac Arnold on vocals, bass and his legendary Gas Can Guitars.

The show begins at 7 p.m. March 12th. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$12 for students

12 and up, \$6 for children 11 and under. Get your tickets early because they are going fast! Tickets are available on line at www.peacockperformingarts.com center click on the blue "Buy Tickets" button. You may also stop by our theater between 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Mon. - Fri. at 301 Church Street, Hayesville, NC or call the box office at 828-389-2787. Tickets may also be purchased at Tiger's Department Store in Hayesville on the Square. NT(Mar2,Z1)CA

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Rayfield with Union County Board of Education members, L-R, Patrick White, Cindy Byers, Board Chair Gary Davenport and Keith Potts

We are ready and excited to get to work, so thank you very much for your confidence and the opportunity to serve."

The board voted 4-0 to hire Rayfield – Board Member Tony Hunter was out of town on business, though Board Chair Gary Davenport said that Hunter was in agreement about Rayfield.

Rayfield has been the superintendent of Decatur County Schools since 2010, and he said he will finish out the 2015-2016 school year there before heading to Union County for several transition days with outgoing Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe prior to his actual start date of June 1.

"Now that the formal part of the process is behind us, we can now focus on getting to know the community, getting to know the people that work in the school system," said Rayfield, who described himself as a servant leader. "My family is very excited about coming in, getting settled in. My daughter is a high school student, so she's excited about coming in and

finding out more about what her experience is going to look like here.

"But my first order of business is to come in and try to meet as many of the school leadership as I can, the teachers – try to get into the buildings and just get to know the lay of the land, so to speak. Now that that formal process is behind us, we can start building those relationships and learning more about how Union County Schools work."

Rayfield was selected out of 27 applicants, nine of which were interviewed, and only Rayfield received a call back for a second interview, according to Davenport.

According to a press statement previously issued by the board, Rayfield was selected for many reasons – he hit every trait and characteristic found most important in an employee and community survey, and he has an extensive background as an educator, superintendent and in agricultural education.

As for why he chose to apply for the Union County job, he said that after 27 years as an educator – 13 of those in