N.C. Cooperative Extension
NC State University
2501 Founders Drive, Suite 120
Campus Box 7602; Patterson Hall
Raleigh, NC 27695-7602

Jackson County Extension

Location: Jackson County

Program Area: 4-H Youth Development,Agriculture and Natural Resources

Immediate/Site Supervisor: Rebekah Davis

Other Mentors and Supervisors: Rob Hawk, Minda Daughtry

Position Description/Responsibilities:

The Jackson County Intern will work under the mentorship of County Extension Agents to bridge the gap between university research and the local community. This is an immersive, multi-faceted role designed for students pursuing careers in plant science, agronomy, or agricultural education. The intern will play a key role in supporting local youth, growers, and residents through technical assistance, field diagnostics, and public outreach.

Key Responsibilities

- Develop original research-based educational materials (fact sheets, infographics, and social media content) for public education.
- Develop original research-based educational materials (lessons, scripts, activities) for youth education.
- Assist in the planning and execution of public workshops, including "Garden Life Series" classes, summer camps, nutrition classes, and more.
- Create and edit video content or blog posts addressing seasonal trends and alerts relevant to various producers.
- Accompany agents on site visits to local farms, nurseries, and orchards to analyze producer concerns and possible assistance pathways.
- Accompany agents on visits to local schools, camps, farms, and recreation spaces for youth educational purposes and programming.
- Manage the preparation and shipment of samples to the NCDA&CS Agronomic Division lab for analysis.
- Help translate soil test reports into actionable lime and fertilizer recommendations for local clientele.
- Assist with on-farm research trials, including data collection for variety trials or new "Climate-Smart" agricultural practices.
- Participate in audits of invasive species or pollinator-friendly landscape designs to improve local biodiversity.
- Assist in production and delivery of various programming for all ages and stages across Jackson County.

Preferred qualifications/previous coursework:

Academic majors in Horticultural Science, Plant Biology, Agronomy, Agricultural Education, or a related field.
Strong written and verbal communication
Ability to translate technical science into "plain language" for the public.
Must be willing to work outdoors in summer heat and humidity
Must possess a valid driver's license and reliable transportation for travel within the county.

Benefits/skills student will gain through this internship:

Develop a "clinical eye" for identifying nutrient deficiencies, fungal pathogens, and insect damage in a variety of North Carolina crops.
Master professional protocols for soil, tissue, and water sampling used in commercial agronomy.
Learn to navigate the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) reporting systems to provide data-driven recommendations.
Gain confidence by presenting to diverse audiences, from farmers, homeowners, to youth of all ages.
Gain firsthand experience in the "Land-Grant Mission," a prerequisite for many future roles in government and university extension.
Receive weekly 1-on-1 coaching sessions with experienced Extension Agents to discuss career goals and professional ethics.
Build a portfolio of published articles, program curriculum, and field reports that can be used for future job or graduate school applications.
By the end of the summer, the intern will be able to manage the "Diagnostic Cycle"—from identifying a field problem to providing a research-based solution.
Build on public speaking and presentation skills.

Additional Information

An Internship in Jackson county provides a mutually beneficial experience for students to gain hands-on Extension experience and for the Jackson Extension Center to expand its local programming. We very much appreciate the mentorship opportunity.

NC State University and NC A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, political beliefs, family and marital status, sex, age, veteran status, sexual identity, genetic information or disability. NC State, NC A&T, US Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating. *Developing Future Research and Extension Professionals to Advance the Essential Cs: Cropping Systems, Climate Smart Agriculture, and Communication: National Center of Excellence for Career Pathways in Agricultural Research and Extension* is funded by the Research and Extension Experiences for Undergraduates (REEU) program of United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food Agriculture (USDA-NIFA) Award Number 2024-68018-43454.