

The Power of Common Vision

“I’m going to see what I can do to get you the equipment you need.” These few words opened up a new realm of possibility for Extension Agricultural programming in Rutherford County. It was said at the conclusion of a “Grass for Graziers” workshop—where we had spent time learning about various forage options for livestock, discussing management techniques, and spent some time in four demonstration plot areas. There’s nothing like seeing, touching and even doing what we’re learning about—and that was the purpose of those plots.

Expressing a hope to expand the demonstration plots, I had just confessed there’s only so much a person can do without equipment and I was proceeding slowly to make sure “I could handle” what I started.

“I’m going to see what I can do,” spoken by the workshop participant, encouraged the Rutherford County Extension Agricultural team to dream big and develop a master plan to increase the demonstration and educational opportunities on the Lane Agri-Park Grounds. The plans are exciting—but this article is about the power of “I’m going to see what I can do” and the community that made it happen.

The workshop participant began conversations with local groups—Rutherford County Soil Conservation, Rutherford Farmers Co-op, Tennessee Farmers Co-op, Rutherford County Farm Bureau, and Farm Credit. These groups developed a vision of investing in the local Extension office to better equip us to educate, train, and equip our community in all things alive. This includes growing food and raising food as well as growing and maintaining beautiful and useful horticultural products.

I’ve been an Extension agent roughly 20 years, and this was the most powerful lesson I have ever witnessed in regard to the power of shared vision in a community. Lively discussions continued amongst and in these individual groups. As I had the blessing of sitting in on a few of their meetings, I heard individuals within these groups powerfully and passionately expressing the desire to serve the Rutherford County Community by providing people the opportunity to learn by seeing, by touching, and yes, by doing—all here on the property of Lane Agri-Park. And they did it. Because of the cooperative effort of these groups, your local Extension office has expanded our demonstration and educational plans.

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“Thank you” doesn’t seem large enough, or big enough, or powerful enough to express our heartfelt gratitude to the individuals within these groups. Rutherford County Soil Conservation, Rutherford Farmers Co-op, Tennessee Farmers Co-op, Rutherford County Farm Bureau, Farm Credit, and individuals within these groups researched equipment, shopped and negotiated for the best prices, spent hours and hours researching the best way to make these transactions possible, and most of all, loved their community enough to sacrifice in this way.

Because of the common vision of these groups and your local Extension office, stay tuned for exciting new demonstrations and classes at Lane Agri-Park. For additional information and or resource information, please call Rebekah Norman at your Rutherford County UT/TSU Extension office, 615-898-7710.