

Northeast News

A District Newsletter

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Feature Story

Improving Pig Production in Liberia through Extension Education

By **Basil Bactawar**
 UF/IFAS Extension Union County
 County Extension Director
 basilbactawar@ufl.edu

During September of 2012, I was asked to carry out a volunteer assignment in Liberia by Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteer Overseas Cooperative Association (ADCI/VOCA). Located on the West Coast of Africa, this country was originally known as the Grain Coast when several European nations had trading connections there between the 1400's to 1800's. Liberia means "land of the free" because it was founded by free African-Americans from the USA in 1820, and the capital city, Monrovia was named after US President James Monroe. Liberia is slightly larger than the state of Tennessee, and has a favorable climate and an abundance of water with vegetation that

is reflective of fertile soils. The country is now recovering from 14 years of civil war which ended in 2003 but destroyed much of its infrastructure and economy. Signs of poverty and unemployment could be seen everywhere I visited, but the peoples' warmth, smiles and laughter were refreshing.

In an effort to reduce poverty and improve the standards of living, the government, in collaboration with the international community, is implementing

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its agriculture policy and strategy. Part of this strategy is a revitalization of the agriculture sector including livestock. The implementation of this strategy in agricultural areas (where 70 percent of the country's four million people live) is well suited to benefit farmers. My assignment was a very small part of the many initiatives that are being undertaken by the United States, and many more countries to assist the people of Liberia.

Upon my arrival in Liberia I spent the first day in Monrovia immediately followed by a day of traveling to the project area called Kakata, located approximately 50 miles from Monrovia. I visited three farms to have a first-hand look at their pig operations, where it appeared to me that the pigs were not fed and managed properly. In developed countries, on average a sow is expected to produce 18-20 piglets per year with market weight of 210 pounds in a period of six months. Some of the six month old market pigs I saw weighed only about 30 pounds. Signs of poor nutrition and internal and external parasites were evident. The local pork industry may not be able to reach the productivity levels of developed countries, but there is room for improvement through extension education and the limited resources that are available locally. The breed of pig can be referred to as non-descript as there were no distinguishing features of an improved breed with the genetic potential to convert feed efficiently. This was my observation, but I wanted to know what the real problem was. Consequently, a meeting was organized by ACDI/VOCA staff to listen to twelve pig farmers and to develop a work plan for the rest of my stay in Liberia. During the meeting it became apparent that the conditions of the pigs were attributed to many factors. There is a lack of farm input such as basic pig de-wormers on the market, limited commercial feed, and it is virtually impossible to buy a mineral supplement for

livestock, much less for pigs. Investing in adequate housing to control worm infestation is also difficult, as the farmers are generally poor and credit is not easily available or sometimes non-existent. The farmers also wanted to know how to make balanced pig rations using ingredients that are available locally. Given all these issues, I decided to change my presentations slightly to meet the need of the producers.

The rest of this assignment was focused on training. The pig producers were trained on selection of breeding stock, breeding, management during farrowing, pig nutrition, balancing simple rations using Pearson's Square and integrated management to control parasites. At the end of the training, all the producers reported an 80 percent increase in knowledge. In addition, I asked anyone in the class to teach on any topic that was learned during the sessions. The objective of this exercise was to reinforce what they had learned by listening to a local pig producer. There was one volunteer who demonstrated how to balance a simple ration using Pearson's Square. I believed that he would be an asset to other producers who may need help in balancing rations.



A pig farmer teaches his peers about what he has learned.

I found out that the participants were enthusiastic and willing to learn new information which would assist them with their business. They were easy to teach merely by the interest they displayed during the teaching sessions. Volunteering in Liberia was a positive experience for me as I was instrumental in helping the participants to improve their situation by imparting valuable technical knowledge to them. I would encourage anyone to consider volunteering for one of these assignments.



Pig farmers listening to a presentation on improved pork production.

From the District Director



Eric Simonne

DED
NE District
simonne@ufl.edu

Trying to get simple answers to a complicated question: What affects UF/IFAS County Faculty salaries?

Every time we get involved in a process that affects agents' salaries, the same questions surface. What affects annual salaries and life-long earnings? And how do factors affect income, such as merit raises, degree at hiring (BS, MS, or PhD), pace of achieving academic promotions (5 or 7 years), and earning a PhD while working?

When it comes to salaries, each situation is different, and therefore covering all the situations is not possible. In an attempt to provide some answers, the annual and life-long salaries of 10 virtual agents were calculated. Each agent represents a likely scenario. Like most real agents, these virtual agents (1) love what they do and are good at it, (2) have a 25-year-long career in Extension, (3) start with no experience, (4) earn their degrees while working and in 4 years, (5) get promotional, educational and merit raises on their entire salary, (6) get a 0% or a 3% annual merit raise every year, and (7) do not become Program Leader, County Extension Director, Multi-County Agent or Regional Specialized Agents.

To do the math, starting salaries were \$35,000 for BS, \$42,000 for MS and \$46,000 for PhD. Earning a degree while on the job resulted in +\$4,000 for PhD and +\$7,000 for an MS (received in 4 equal annual increases in both cases). Each promotion resulted in a 9% raise. When degree was earned and a 3% merit raise was received, it was applied to the salary BEFORE adding the educational pay increase for that year. All these hypotheses are realistic, with the exception of one. It is unlikely that an agent will receive the same 3% merit raise for 25 consecutive years, while another one will receive none. The reality is that (1) merit (and across-the-board) raises change and are difficult to predict and (2) the actual salary increase for agents who receive two pay checks (one from the state, one from the county) depends on their state/county split, and whether the county honors the state raises or not. So, while unrealistic, the assumptions of 0% or 3% represent two extremes – with the practical cases falling in between.

These 10 virtual agents have names (any resemblance with real people is purely coincidental); please meet:

Mark: “on track, unlucky”: hired with an MS degree; gets fast (every 5 years) promotion of 9%, and no merit raise.

Yolanda: “on track, lucky”: hired with an MS degree; gets fast (every 5 years) promotion (9% raise) and a 3% merit raise each year

Jason: “lazy, unlucky”: hired with an MS degree; gets slow (every 7 years) promotion (9% raise) and no merit raise.

Zachone: “lazy, lucky”: hired with an MS degree; gets slow (every 7 years) promotion (9% raise) and a 3% merit raise each year.

Bill: “on track for a while, unlucky, disillusioned”: hired with an MS degree; gets fast (every 5 years) promotions (9% raise) until he reaches rank III (retires as an agent III) and gets no merit raise.

Archie: “on track for a while, lucky, disillusioned”: hired with an MS degree; gets fast (5 years) promotions (9%) until he reaches rank III (retires as an agent III) and gets a 3% merit raise each year

Jessica: “needs an MS; on track, unlucky”: hired with a BS degree, earns her MS degree while on the job, gets fast (every 5 years) promotions (9% raise) and gets no merit raise.

Nicolas: “needs an MS, on track, lucky”: hired with a BS degree, earns his MS degree while on the job, gets fast (every 5 years) promotions (9%) and gets a 3% merit raise each year.

Dr. Alex: “the scholar, unlucky”: hired with a BS degree, earns his MS degree while on the job, gets fast (every 5 years) promotions (9%), gets no merit raise and earns his PhD on the job between the ranks of agent III and IV.

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Trying to get simple answers to a complicated question: What affects UF/IFAS County Faculty salaries?...continued from previous page

Dr. Claire: “the scholar, lucky”: hired with a BS degree, earns her MS degree while on the job, gets fast (every 5 years) promotions (9%), gets a 3% merit raise each year, and earns her PhD on the job between the ranks of agent III and IV.

Cumulative (Fig.1) and annual (Fig.2) salary simulations show the same trends. First, life-long salaries ranged between a low of \$1,187,400 for Bill to a high of \$1,848,879 for Dr. Claire. Bill’s highest annual income was \$49,900, while that of Dr. Claire was \$114,590. This represents a huge monetary difference. These differences are further magnified through all the social security benefits that are based on income. Second, the bars (Fig. 1) and lines (Fig. 2) show two clear groups: those who received 0% annual raises and those who received 3%. This is an illustration of the compounding interest effect. Earlier merit raises yield a greater rate of compound interest. It should be noted that all the “small” differences among simulations are real. Statistics do not apply here, because no sampling occurred.

Trends in Figs 1 and 2 also show that every little raise makes a difference in the long run. So, there are no such things as “small raises”. Hence, the importance of keeping careers on track: getting the highest academic degree possible; achieving promotion as quickly as possible; and, receiving promotional raises as often as possible. While we cannot control all these factors, being good at what we do certainly helps.

Everyone is encouraged to “run his/her own numbers” and reflect on what they tell, keeping in mind that factors other than salary also contribute to job satisfaction and performance.

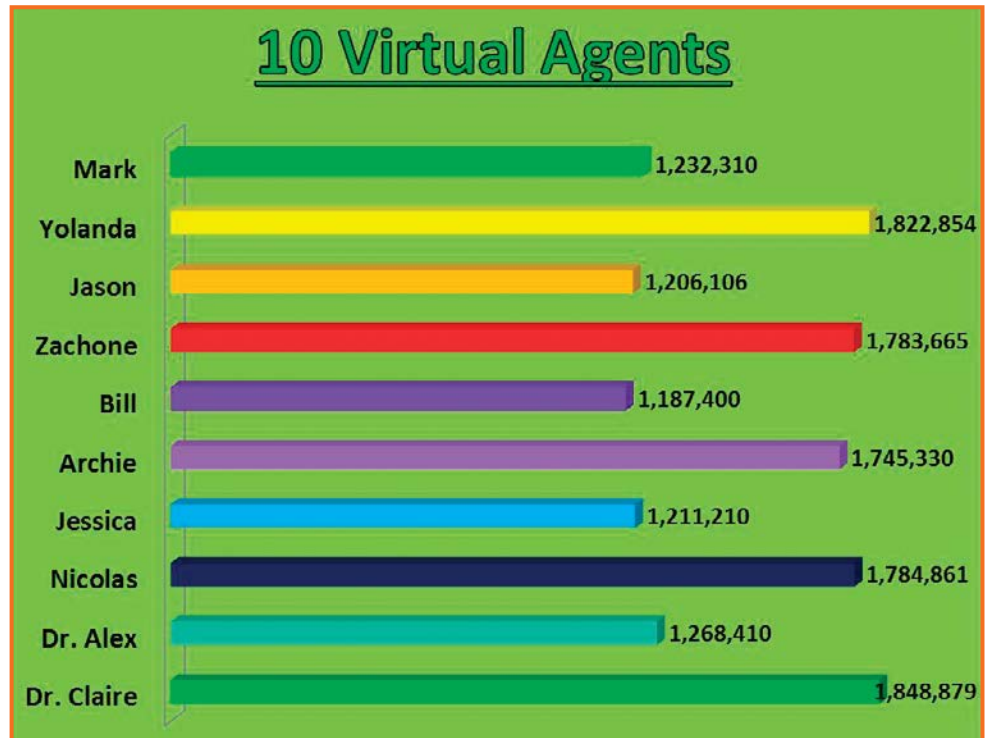


Fig. 1. Career salaries for 10 simulations (scenarios) of a 25-year period of employment as a UF/IFAS County Extension Faculty (see text for detail of each scenario)

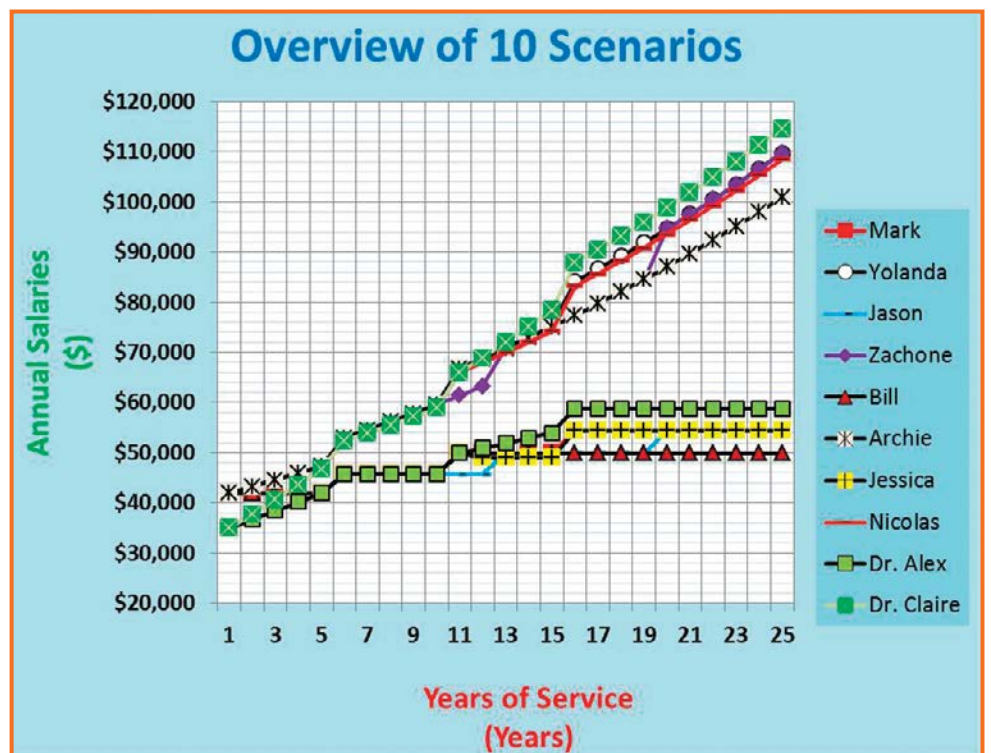


Fig. 2. Changes in annual salaries during 10 simulations (scenarios) of a 25-year period of employment as a UF/IFAS County Extension Faculty (see text for detail of each scenario)

District Life

Promotion and Permanent Status Committee Update

By **Jackie Schrader**
UF/IFAS Extension Clay County
4-H/Family and Consumer Science Agent
jbschrad@ufl.edu

The Northeast Promotion and Permanent Status Committee was formed three years ago to help agents in our district with the daunting task of completing their packets. It is not mandatory that candidates use the committee but time has shown this to be very helpful. It is nice to know that fellow agents are willing to answer questions and give guidance to this process and candidates have stated they appreciate the help.

During January, 3-year and 5-year candidates received a calendar of deadline dates to be followed if they decided to use the committee. Dates were established for submission of packet sections to make it easier and less time-consuming on candidates and reviewers. All packets were reviewed by at least 5 of the 9 committee members so candidates could receive a variety of opinions. The P&T committee reviewed 11(5-year) and

5 (3-year) packets during the months of March and April. During mid-April, the committee met for final discussion and assessments, giving candidates their reviews shortly after. At that point, it was up to the candidates to make informed decisions on the suggestions they would follow and Dr. Simonne worked with each to finalize their submissions to the University.

Eligible NE District Faculty Members Provide Valuable Input into 2013 Mid-Career Process

By **Eric Simonne**
UF/IFAS Extension
DED – NE District
simonne@ufl.edu

I would like to thank all eligible faculty who took the time to provide section-by-section comments to the mid-career packets. Such a process takes time as the NE Extension District has 6 candidates this year. Comments were intellectually critical, honest and well worded... and required a careful reading of the packets. This was very useful to me and will help your peers. Good job!

2013 NE District Faculty Workshop Evaluation Results!!!

Click here for the results or Visit http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu/documents/Evaluationresultsof2013NEDistrictFacultyWorkshop_WebVersion.pdf

After reading how others evaluated the sessions and reflecting back on the meeting, consider taking the time to make suggestions to Dr. Simonne for improving next year's meeting.

How Does the University of Florida Work?

We educate, we do not advocate. So must do our volunteers!

Some UF/IFAS volunteers (possibly Master Gardeners, 4-H, Master Money Mentors, Home Community Educators or occasional volunteers) may actively seek signatures on petitions to support

various special-interest initiatives dealing with the environments, politics, societal issues or others. They may also take positions in presentations that are not consistent with UF recommendations or research. Please coach your volunteers that they should not be advocating for initiatives while they are representing themselves as a UF/IFAS volunteer. They can do this on their own

time acting as concerned citizens, but not while they are actively volunteering and representing UF/IFAS Extension. We know they have great intentions, but we need to protect our roll as educators from UF/IFAS Extension.

Teaching Tips



Joy Goodwin

UF/IFAS Center for
Public Issues
Education
Asst. Prof.
Dept. of Ag. Ed.
and Comm.
jnrumbler@ufl.edu

Rejuvenate Learning with Case Studies

Are you tired of trying to teach something to a room full of people who are looking rather sleepy or who are distracted by their technology? Do you ever feel like you deliver great information to a clientele audience, but they just don't get it? The hustle and bustle, information overload and technological advancements of today's society can make it a challenge to teach learners, both young and old.

Case studies have been identified as a useful tool to combat distractions in a learning environment, while also appealing to the adult learner. Case studies require the learner to get involved and offer an innovative approach to the learning process.

Malcolm Knowles, the father of adult learning, identified criteria under which adult learners learn best. By using case studies, teachers can meet these criteria while enhancing the learning environment for their adult learners. The

following have been identified as criteria for enhanced adult learning.

1. Adults learn best when they know why they're learning something.
 - The scenarios presented through case studies provide learners with the opportunity to see how they may be presented with the same scenario in the future. Knowing that they may have to encounter a similar situation gives learners a reason and motivation for learning.
2. Adults learn best through experience.
 - Even if a case study scenario is fictional, the exercise and practice of going through the case study and thinking critically to solve the problem presented in the case study gives learners the opportunity to participate in an experience.
3. Adults learn best when they have an opportunity to solve problems.
 - Many case studies put learners in a position where they have to solve a problem that is presented. The case study may simply ask a learner how they would respond in a given situation or it may go more in-depth and ask them to solve several parts of a problem. Going through this process initiates learning and application for future encounters.

4. Adults learn best when they can apply the topic in a relevant and immediate manner.

- Case studies are a great way for teachers to take information presented and ask the learners to apply what they have learned. The application of learning topics helps learners retain information and see how the information may be applicable to their job or life.

If you are constantly battling a distracted or bored learner, case studies may be the key to rejuvenating your lesson plans. Several case study resources as well as already prepared case studies can be found on the Internet. Reminding ourselves of adult learning criteria as well as different teaching methods can help us all improve our teaching and continue to meet the needs of our learners.

Source: *Mind Tools. (2013). Case study-based learning: Enhancing learning through immediate application. Retrieved from http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newlSS_94.htm*

Did you **know**

The Jury is Out: Northeast District Promotion News

Please join me in congratulating the following agents for their achievements and promotions:

Melanie Thomas – Agent II and Permanent Status

Heather Futch – Agent II and Permanent Status

Debbie Nistler – Agent III

Mary Sowerby – Agent IV

Katherine Allen – Agent IV

Andy Toelle – Agent IV

Congratulations and keep up the good work!



We are excited to announce that registration for the 14th Annual CALS Teaching Enhancement Symposium is now open! TES2013 will be held on Monday, August 12 from 10am-4:30pm at the UF Hilton Conference Center. This year's theme of "Creativity & Learning" is reflected through the outstanding line-up of presentations, as well as our keynote speaker, Dr. David Gagnon.

If you wish to attend, please review the agenda at

<http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu/documents/TES2013Agenda.pdf> to determine which sessions you will attend. Then, visit the registration site to make your selections:

<http://calstes2013.eventbrite.com/>

Also, please make note of the later start time and different session format, both new to this year's symposium! If you have questions or concerns regarding the program or your registration, please contact Natalie Coers (ncoers@ufl.edu).

Quiz Question

By **Nichelle Demorest**
UF/IFAS Extension Columbia County
Horticulture Agent
dndemorest@ufl.edu

Before the invention or widespread use of farm tractors, man and mule invested many hours of actual in-field labor. For instance, in 1945, a man with 2 mules, a 1-row plow and cultivator, a hand hoe and a hand pick could plant and harvest an average of 100 pounds of lint cotton from 2/5 acre. How many hours did that farmer spend laboring in his plot of cotton? (A. 27 hours; B. 42 hours; C. 58 hours; D. 66 hours)

Answer: B

In 1945 it would have taken the farmer about 42 hours to realize a yield of 100 pounds of lint cotton from 2/5 acre. By 1965, the farmer and his tractor, a 2-row stalk cutter, a 14 foot disk, a 4-row bedder, planter and cultivator, and a 2-row harvester could bring in the same 100 pounds of lint cotton. The difference: 5 total input hours and only 1/5 acre!

Reliable field labor and praedial larceny are two of the most urgent problems facing Caribbean small farmers. How is the country of Trinidad and Tobago attempting to control praedial larceny?

Northeast District **County Extension Offices** – Find your local office at <http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/map/>

Alachua

2800 NE 39th Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32609
Phone: 352.955.2402

Baker

1025 W Macclenny Avenue
Macclenny, FL 32063
Phone: 904.259.3520

Bradford

2266 N Temple Avenue
Starke, FL 32091
Phone: 904.966.6224

Citrus

3650 W. Sovereign Path, Suite 1
Lecanto, FL 34461
Phone: 352.527.5700

Clay

2463 SR 16 West
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043
Phone: 904.284.6355

Columbia

164 SW Mary Ethel Lane
Lake City, FL 32025
Phone: 386.752.5384

Dixie

99 NE 121st Street
Cross City, FL 32628
Phone: 352.498.1237

Duval

1010 N McDuff Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32254
Phone: 904.255.7450

Gilchrist

125 E Wade Street
Trenton, FL 32693
Phone: 352.463.3174

Hamilton

1143 NW US HWY 41
Jasper, FL 32052
Phone: 386.792.1276

Lafayette

176 SW Community Circle, Suite D
Mayo, FL 32066
Phone: 386.294.1279

Levy

625 N Hathaway Avenue, Alt. 27
Bronson, FL 32621
Phone: 352.486.5131

Madison

184 College Loop
Madison, FL 32340
Phone: 850.973.4138

Nassau

543350 US Hwy 1
Callahan, FL 32011
Phone: 904.879.1019

Suwannee

1302 11th Street SW
Live Oak, FL 32064
Phone: 386.362.2771

Taylor

203 Forest Park Drive
Perry, FL 32348
Phone: 850.838.3508

Union

25 NE 1st Street
Lake Butler, FL 32054
Phone: 386.496.2321

NENEWS Editorial Team

Alicia Lamborn (chair), Basil Bactawar, Nichelle Demorest, Jim DeValerio, Larry Figart, Aparna Gazula, Mary Sowerby, Andrew Toelle

Graphic Design

UF/IFAS Communications