

The Job of a Livestock Agent  
By Lydia Ryan, Rockingham County 4-H

When I was told I had to interview a county official I thought to myself 'ok well who do I want to do my interview with?'. I finally decided to interview our Rockingham County Livestock Extension Agent, Ben Chase. I went into the interview knowing nothing but his name was Ben and the few things my 4-H agent had told me. I soon found out a lot more about Ben and realized he has an important job.

He is the Livestock Agent for not only Rockingham County, but also for Guilford County as well. This is a large work load with both counties having a large agricultural background. Ben is an educator so he made the interview interesting.

I sat down in his office with a few questions prepared. Little did I know I would be answering most of my questions! Every time I would ask a question such as 'what does your job entail?' his reply would be 'well what do you think my job entails?'. This was an interesting approach to an interview, but he made me think!

During the interview I learned that Ben's job requires him to know as much as humanly possible about livestock and agriculture. Ben is called upon when people have any questions about horses, cows, pigs, goats, or sheep. He has to have the answers to their questions or find a resource for the client that will help them. Ben only uses research based information in his work. He not only has to know about livestock, but he also gets questions about fertilizer, equipment, grass, hay and crops. His job also requires him to respond to clients in a timely manner. One of Ben's big weekly projects is his "weekly pile" email that goes out to hundreds of people in the community. The email informs the community of articles, events, concerns and research on livestock, equine, and agriculture.

Ben says he works twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred and sixty-five days a year! He said he does have to take a lot of his work home with him. His job also requires him to have good people skills and business skills to be able to communicate with his clients and other Extension Agents.

Ben got interested in livestock and agriculture and decided to learn more when he went to college at North Carolina State University. He did tell me that the more college you have, the better off you are and the more likely you will be to get a job.

I really enjoyed the opportunity to interview a county employee within Rockingham County Cooperative Extension. I learned new things about Cooperative Extension and the job of a county Livestock Agent.