

# An Interactive Equine Pasture Management Workshop Series Designed for the Foothills Region of North and South Carolina

Cassie W. LeMaster\*, Area Livestock Agent- Equine Extension Coordinator<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Clemson Extension, Laurens, SC, [cwycoff@clemson.edu](mailto:cwycoff@clemson.edu)

## Introduction

The Foothills region of the Carolinas is a unique area along the western border of North and South Carolina. State and county equine census data from 2008 and 2004 for the four neighboring counties- two on each side of the state line, estimate a range in equine population between 17,100 and 19,400. The influx of non-native equestrians and farm managers to an already thriving equestrian community has led to an increased demand for educational opportunities covering best pasture management practices specific to our climate, soil and forage types.



## Response

Extension Agents from Clemson and North Carolina Cooperative Extension partnered to offer a unique interactive pasture management course for the Carolina Foothills area. The 1-d course, held in May 2019 at Cotton Patch Farm, a historic 400 acre horse farm in Tryon, NC, offered a total of 4 h of instruction. Participants were split and rotated between four groups to allow for hands-on opportunities. The stations were designed to walk the workshop attendees through the process of horse pasture management.



**Station 2** viewed common pasture plants for the area, identified weeds, and discussed the best forages to plant for horse pastures in the region.



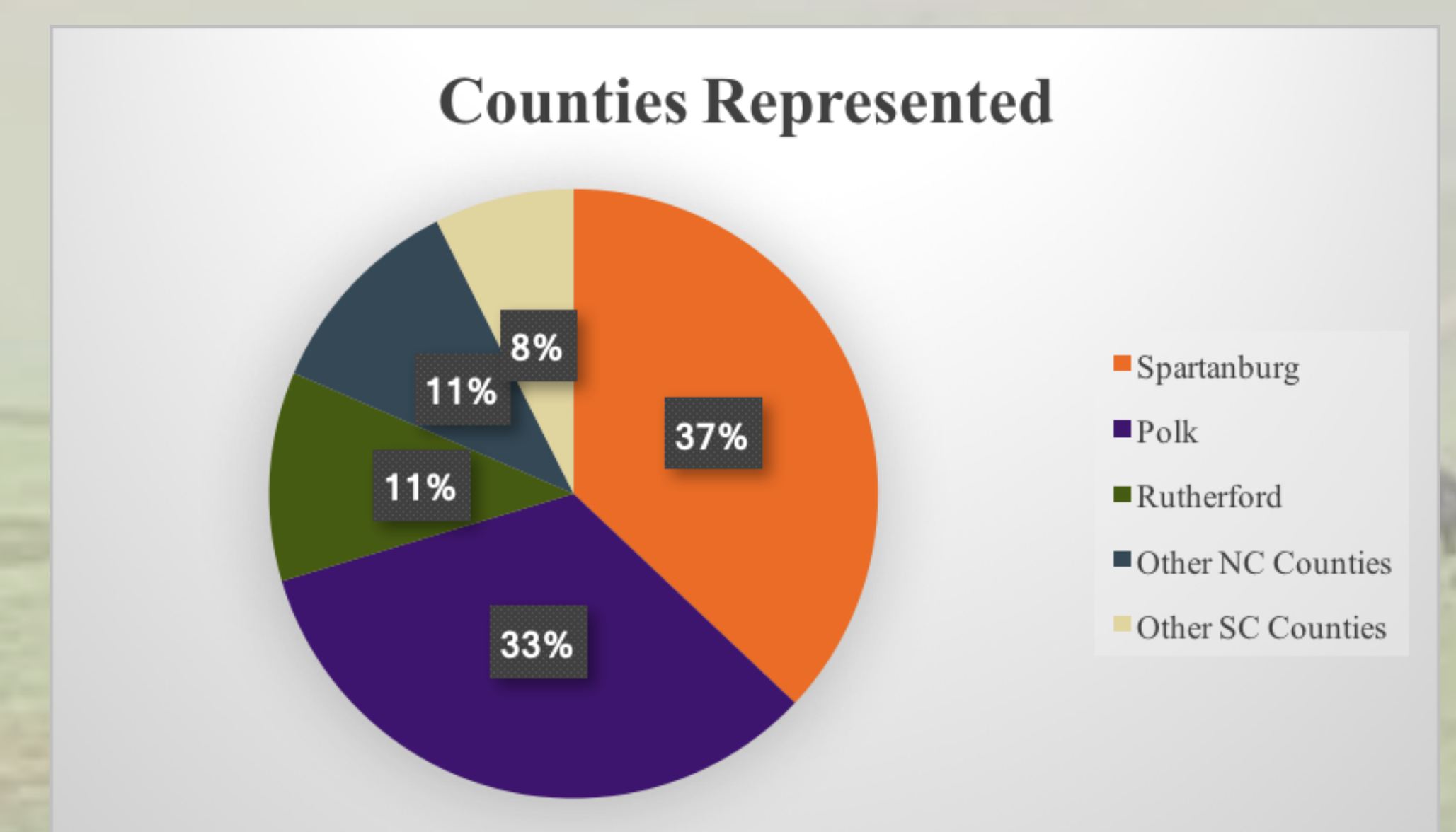
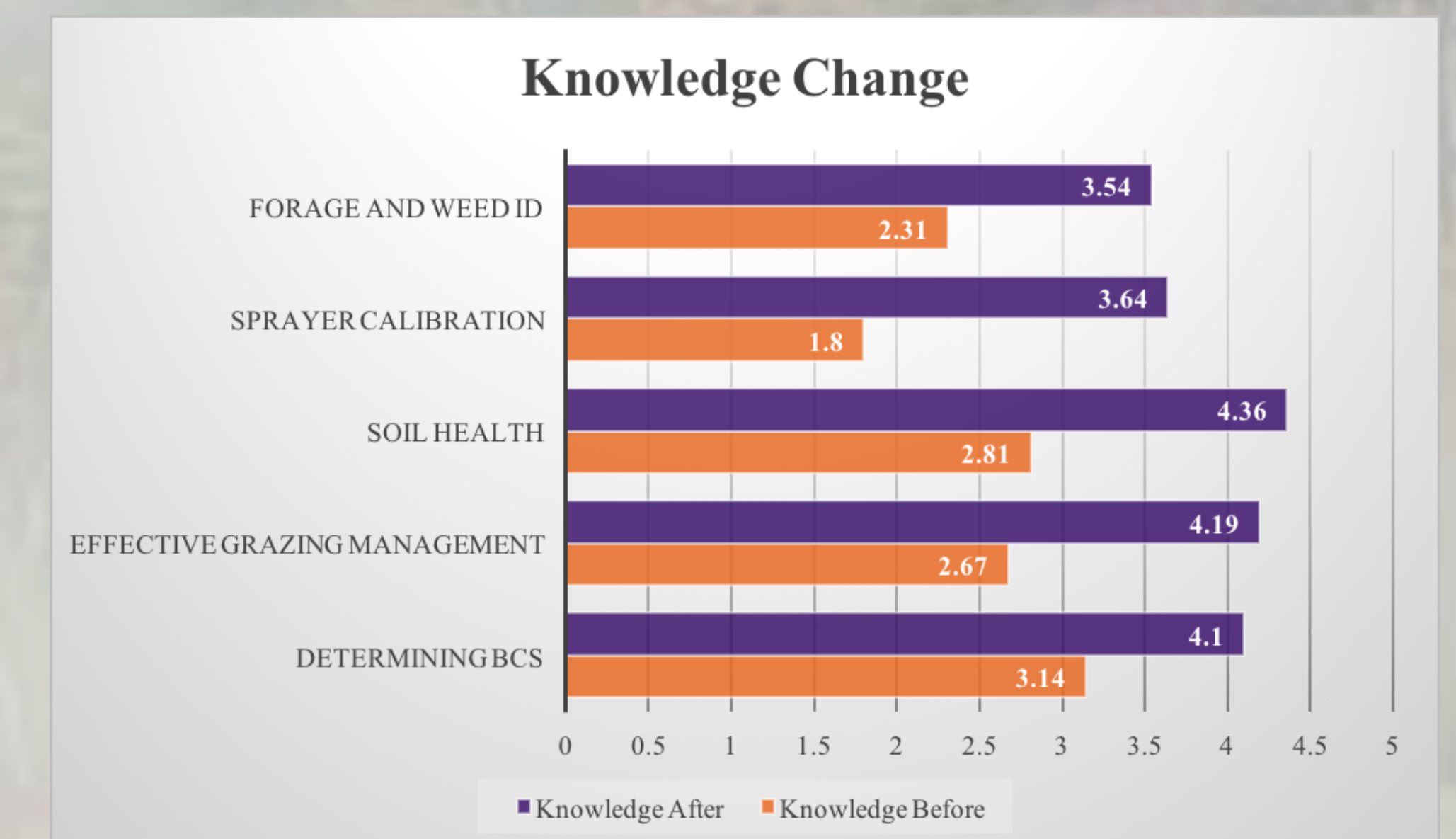
In **Station 3**, participants learned how to calibrate a boom sprayer and about proper control of common pasture weeds.



Finally, in **Station 4**, participants learned the principles of soil health and were introduced on how to properly use temporary electric fencing to manage grazing and forage use.

## Results

Workshop participation was capped at 50, and the course was filled. Of the participants, 82% completed the written evaluation. Subject knowledge before and after the workshop was reported using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very low, 5 = very high) in five categories: 1) determining body condition score, 2) effective and efficient grazing management, 3) importance of soil health, 4) sprayer calibration, and 5) identification of pasture plants and forage varieties suitable for local pastures. Reported subject knowledge rating increased in all 5 categories, with an average pre-workshop rating of 2.55 and an average post-workshop rating of 4.06. The survey responses indicate an eagerness among area horse owners to further their knowledge on the topics presented, and the collaborative Extension effort was an effective method to provide the best resources from each land grant institution.



## Program Committee

Addison Bradley, Livestock Agent, N.C. Cooperative Extension  
 Jeff Bradley, Livestock Agent, N.C. Cooperative Extension  
 Noah Henson, Extension Agent, N.C. Cooperative Extension  
 Cassie Wycoff LeMaster, Area Livestock Agent, Equine Extension Coordinator, Clemson Cooperative Extension  
 Christopher LeMaster, Area Livestock Agent, Clemson Cooperative Extension



**Station 1** taught body condition scoring and methods for forage intake control. Participants learned how to use a weigh tape to estimate energy balance and viewed dry lot designs as a method for managing forage intake and saving pastures during times of adverse growing conditions (i.e., drought, excessive rainfall, etc.) Grazing behavior of horses was also observed and established why managing this behavior is necessary for healthy horse pastures.

