Changing Lives

IN BALLARD COUNTY

Extension provides practical education you can trust by helping individuals, families, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.

Nutrition Education for Second Graders

Like most of Kentucky, Ballard County is plagued with high diabetes rates, high adult and childhood obesity rates, as well as other nutrition related disorders. The Ballard County Cooperative Extension Service teamed with the Ballard County Elementary school to target second graders for a Nutrition Week SNAP-ed program to help them make healthier choices on a limited budget and choose a more active lifestyle consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the My Pyramid.gov. Eighty-six second grade students participated in 4 days of training on our food groups, nutrients and the story of food from the farmer’s field to the plate on their dinner table at home and the effect on their health from eating a variety of these foods. The Ballard Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences along with the 4-H Youth Development and the Ag and Natural Resource agents presented lessons with the help of Extension homemakers and high school student volunteers on topics from “Farm To Table”, Literacy and Eating for Primary Health, Jump Into Food and Fitness and Plate It Up curricula. All topics and activities were planned with the Kentucky Department of Education program of studies. Each day the students were provided with healthy snacks and handouts to take home to their parents. Ninety percent said they planned to ask their parents to provide more fruits and vegetables in their meal planning. Twenty percent of students said they had already started eating more fruits and vegetables since the class began.

A culminating event was held at a working poultry and beef farm. The youths toured laying houses, observed cows in the field, petted goats and learned about ruminants; they learned about farm machinery and safety then lunched at a public park with a nutritious lunch and physical activity.

This has been an ongoing program that meets the needs of youth in terms of health as well as helps the school teach their curriculum. The culminating event rotates between various farms.

Priority Program Efforts

- A total of 115 people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
- 17 producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations.
- 167 youth and adults utilized the leadership skills, learned through participation in Extension leadership programs
- 259 youth and adults demonstrated increased practical living skills learned through Extension programming.
- A total of 137 individuals made lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health.
- 10 individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.
AG AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Round Up Resistant Weed Education
Technology advances in Agriculture have led to greater production but they have also had some unintended consequences. One of the unintended consequences has been the emergence of Glyphosate or (Round-Up) resistant weeds. Since their beginnings in the mid 90’s, herbicide resistant crops have entirely changed the way row crop producers have managed weed control for effective crop production. Now with these resistant weeds, crop production is going to have to change again. To begin the process an educational meeting was conducted in winter of 2012 with Dr. Jim Martin, Extension Weed Specialist with the University of Kentucky. Demonstration plots were established in 2012 and 2013 to educate producers on weed id and effective options for control. A weed survey was conducted in the summer of 2012, where resistant weeds were collected from several fields across the county and sent to the University of Illinois so that the resistance type of each sample could be determined and a control plan developed. From a couple of years ago, being in less than 10% of the fields, today almost 100% of the fields have weeds of some type that are resistant to Round-up. That has led to new, more expensive weed control programs that require a much higher level of management ability to insure adequate weed control. Just in Ballard County alone, the additional money that will have to be spent on weed control will be over $1,400,000 per year. Grower education has continued with farmer meetings, newsletters, and newspaper articles to promote the most effective methods for control. Visual evidence by observing farmer fields shows a much greater level of control this growing season than the prior year.

Ballard County CAIP Program
Since the advent of the master Settlement Agreement and the creation of the Ag Development Funds, the Ballard County Ag Development Board has done a wonderful job using the money to help replace lost tobacco income. The latest round of funding was for the Ballard County CAIP Program and included over $275,000. Fifty- five applications were approved for a $5,000, 50% cost share. Eligible investment areas were across the board from Precision Ag Equipment to Beef, Poultry and Dairy improvements which allowed almost any producer in Ballard County to be able to fit the funding into their operation. Educational meetings were conducted by Tom Miller, Ballard County Extension Agent for Ag and Natural Resources, on all investment areas. Fifty one producers received around $220,000, which means at least $220,000 of their own money was spent on improvements.

Using Crop Insurance for Risk Reduction
With the huge escalation in the costs and possible profits associated with grain crop production in Kentucky, one of the best tools for risk management has become the Federal Crop Insurance Program. After the major drought of 2012 and the associated crop losses, agricultural leaders in Ballard County determined that education on crop insurance was a high priority. Ballard County Agriculture and Natural Resources agent, Tom Miller, in conjunction with Dr. Cory Walters, Extension Grain Specialist, and several regional crop insurance providers developed a series of newsletter articles and farmer meetings to help with grower education. When the program was completed, growers understood the different options available to them, but more importantly understood what questions and direction they needed from a crop insurance agent to develop an individual program for their operation to help them reduce their risk.

4H AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Youth Leadership Development
Ballard County’s potential leadership demographics are changing. Our School Superintendent, school principals and more experienced leaders want a younger generation to begin to take more leader roles. Those community leaders are encouraging and helping sponsor leadership programs such as Leadership Ballard. This year, I was asked by the school superintendent and other administration to expand our current leadership program. We continued our Leadership Ballard Program with a slightly different format and made the focus for 4th and 5th grade clubs community/state leadership and communications for leadership their respective club lesson focus. In the 4th grade, we learned who their legislators were, covered the three branches of government, learned our state motto and symbols, learned how a Bill becomes a Law and more. In the 5th grade, we focused on the many ways we communicate to lead and to work within groups. Each 5th grader wrote a personal story and presented it orally to the class. They were encouraged to write neatly and use correct grammar and vocabulary. They practiced projection of their voices and developed confidence
speaking in front of a group. We discussed various ways people communicate including body language and sign language; one way communication verses two way communication; giving specific directions and listening as part of communicating.

Leadership training was provided to eighteen 6th graders that were selected for Leadership Ballard. This program received $3,700 in sponsorship from the Ballard County Chamber of Commerce and its members this year. The 2014 Leadership Ballard class met during "club meeting time" at the Middle School beginning in September 2013. With this new format, we had more class time and were able to utilize more teambuilding activities and had more lesson time on communications and speeches. This group of 18 students learned about state government through a tour of the state capitol, Kentucky History Center and Vietnam Memorial. They also had lessons on identifying leaders, team building, leadership styles, situational leadership, manners and etiquette, and communications. 100% of this group learned whether they were task oriented or social oriented leaders. After that 100% of this group reported learning their dominate leadership style between Director, Supporter, Thinker and Promoter. They understand that it takes more than one type of leadership style to accomplish tasks effectively. 100% reported learning at least three new things about both their county and state government. They all know their State Senator and State Representative. One hundred percent felt more comfortable speaking before a group, as a direct result of more lesson time with these students. They all learned that the more responsibilities you have the more organized and focused you have to be to be successful.

The Leadership Ballard group also got to visit with local policy makers and took part in a mock city council meeting and a district court mock trial on one local field trip. The other local field trip included a visit to the ambulance, volunteer fire departments and the rescue squad. This group has a very good parent base and agreed they want to have a first aid and safety course taught to them that they will attend at a later time. The EMS Director and Community Education Director are working on that project in cooperation with the Fiscal Court. Materials used for all the Leadership groups came from Step Up To Leadership, Unlock Your Leadership Potential and Ken Blanchard materials. This Extension Agent taught most lessons and set up the State Capitol trip and service project.

Community Education Director taught some lessons and set up the local field trips. Ballard County FCS Agent taught Manners and Etiquette.

This agent is very happy to report that the desired results of Leadership Ballard and the Community Education/Service Learning/Teen Paging Program are coming to fruition. One new active member of the Ballard County Fair Board is a Leadership Ballard Alumni and is serving in a key role on the County Fair Board. He is helping bring in other young men his age to be involved and make a difference in the community. Another Leadership Ballard/Page alumni is a new member of the Ballard County Chamber of Commerce and serves as the Public Relations Director of a growing bank in this region. Yet another alumni just graduated college in 3 years and is already working with a company he worked for during the summers, then interned with through college summers. Several of the Leadership Ballard Alumni have served as teen leaders at 4-H Camp and other roles as they develop. Three are currently state HOSA officers; others are taking leadership roles in a variety of their high school extracurricular activities. There are soon to be more of these Leadership Ballard Alumni to begin filling the roles we had hoped they would.

**SNAP-ED**

Ballard County Schools hover at the 50% level of low income families and receive assistance for food. Our school qualifies for all free meals. This agent utilizes the SNAP-ED Program primarily through the 21st Century after school setting because the need is strong and the participants all enjoy the accomplishment of preparing food and then eating it. They learn inexpensive and healthy ways to entertain family and friends for special events and healthy snacks to eat at home. We focus on a variety of foods and use the SNAP-ED and Kentucky Proud Recipes when possible. We have lessons throughout the year with a major focus during March, National Nutrition Month. This year during March, many of our planned lessons didn't occur due to weather issues, but we did get to have some time in summer day camp classes. Our after school lessons focused on healthy after school snacks, entertaining on a budget and with healthy options. We used fresh foods as often as possible. We learned to read a recipe, follow directions, measure liquid and dry ingredients, made healthy holiday treats, learned to display food in a pleasing manner and to clean up safely. Our
day camp consisted of a "food group" kabob, parfait with fresh fruit, plain yogurt and granola, trail mix and apple juice. It is rewarding to see the faces on students as they accomplish a kitchen task and then even more rewarding when they try a healthy snack and enjoy it.

We were able to share several of our SNAP-ED materials with these groups including measuring tools, cutting boards, water bottles, and more. We also distributed Kentucky Proud recipes.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

LEAPing to Good Health
For the past three years, Ballard County second grade teachers have partnered with Cooperative Extension to target second graders for a large part of their Nutrition and Physical Activity education. The 86 students and their teachers participated in eight sessions of the Literacy, Eating and Activity for Primary Health (LEAP) series, taught by Cooperative Extension FCS agent and Extension Homemakers, throughout the school year. At each session, students were read a story about a character who tried a new food or learned something about the health benefits of good nutrition and or being physically active at least 30 minutes each day. They were able to identify with the character in the book and tried the healthy food offered that day. Most students said they would like to try the food again and would ask their parent to include it in meals at home. They also received a handout for their parent to use in reinforcing the message they learned each time.

After trying baby spinach, one student came back to the room to say, "This is the best stuff I have ever ate!" Many students were able to identify several forms of activity to increase their heart rates and burn excess calories. The lead teacher stated that she feels the classes have been beneficial, noticing that the students are retaining what they have heard, talking about the key points long after the class is over. At the end of each session students were able to identify various fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein foods and dairy.

Senior Citizens Stand Up to Falling
Ballard County’s current population of seniors (65+) is 18%, a number that is expected to double in the next 40 years due to the aging Baby Boomers (post WWII babies born between 1946-1964).

Approximately 25% of Ballard County’s population includes Boomers, who, in 2011, started turning 65. Meanwhile, babies born in Kentucky in 2011 are projected to live to be 75 years old (3 years younger than the national average). Whether it is the graying of America or extended life expectancies, aging is a lifespan process. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge and celebrate the changes that accompany aging, in regard to health, independence and life quality throughout all stages of life. After the age of 65, common age-related physical changes and medical conditions, including the medications taken to treat illness and disease, increase a persons’ risk of falling. While not all falls are serious, falls continue to remain the leading cause of injury and injury-related death among older adults in the United States. Eighteen Senior Citizens program participants attended the Stand Up to Falling series conducted by the Cooperative Extension Service. The highlight of the program is its focus on four preventable risk factors: lack of exercise, unsafe home environments, vision problems, and medication usage. When these factors are properly addressed, people can lower their chance of falling and even prevent a fall from occurring. A post survey showed that as a result of this program 100% of participants understand how to reduce the risk of falling. Eighty percent will protect their vision and/or see an eye doctor. Fifty-five percent plan to make changes to their home to reduce the risk of falling. Sixty percent plan to review their medications with a doctor or pharmacist. Fifty-five percent will be more physically active regarding strength, balance & flexibility. All know how to get up from a fall.