

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

Changing Lives

IN BOYD COUNTY



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



Two years ago the first ever Vegetable Field Day was held at a local farm in Boyd County to highlight the use of plastic mulch in vegetable production for home gardeners and small farmers market producers. In August 2014, the field day focused on different tomato staking methods, mulching with straw as opposed to the plastic mulch and variety selections of tomatoes and beans as well as a bee-keeping station to show strategies on hive care. Other activities added to the field day were displays for canning, food preservation and healthy food choices by the Food and Consumer Sciences Agent, Nutrition Extension Professional Assistants and volunteers. The 4-H/Youth Development agent also offered activities for children and the Agriculture and Natural Resources agent planted trial plots to show different types of summer annual forages for pasture and hay.

Horticulture

Lori Bowling, Agent

On the route for people to stop and visit to learn about the eastern Kentucky heritage as well as the history of each individual site. Some of these stops offer demonstrations such as sorghum making. There are also local Appalachian goods for sale, which help to boost the local economy. Those who visit the tour will finish the day with a knowledge of what eastern Kentucky farming was and is like today and have a better appreciation for what early farming was like.

With an increase in people interested in starting a small hobby farm in the Boyd County area, the county extension council identified the need to offer an educational conference on small space gardening and farming with an equipment expo. Several seminars were given by University of Kentucky Extension Specialists on topics such as backyard composting, fruit tree grafting, small scale fruit production and insect management. Local farm stores set up at the equipment expo to showcase what they would be offering for the upcoming growing season and several farm equipment businesses brought small scale farm equipment to display.

For several years the Horticulture Extension program has worked with the City of Ashland to try to get a farmers market re-established inside the city limits of Ashland. King's Daughters Medical Center contacted the Extension Office to set up a meeting about the possibility of using one of their parking lots for a farmer's market location and in June of 2015 the Ashland location of the Boyd County Farmers Market opened with a record number of customer for their first day. The market has become very popular with the employees of the medical center due to them being able to purchase produce using a payroll deduction system. This market has also become a popular place for many of the senior voucher recipients to redeem their vouchers as well. Each week the market featured either a new recipe sample to try, cooking demonstration or local live music which has been an asset to the community around the medical center.



Farmer's Market at KDMC



Equipment on display in the Fair Building during the 2015 Kentucky Farm Machinery Show and Exhibition.

Agriculture & Natural Resources

Lyndall Harned, Agent

February 28th was the date of the first ever, and hopefully annual, Northeast Kentucky Farm Machinery Show and Exhibition. It was held at the Extension owned Boyd County Fairgrounds in the newly renovated Fair Building. It took place in conjunction with the Northeast KY Horticulture and Small Farm Conference, which was held next door in the Franks Extension Building.

There were 5 exhibitors who accepted the invitation to showcase everything from large tractors to lawn tractors, from beekeeping to gardening supplies, and most anything related to farming or gardening in between. There were well over 100 people who came through the displays and checked out the various equipment and supplies.

The purpose and reason behind the Boyd County Extension Ag Advisory Council planning and hosting this event was multi-faceted. First, it was a way to get multiple dealers together in one place for potential customers to check out their wares, as well as for them to be able to talk to the vendors about their needs.

Second, it was a way to help the dealers in our county and neighboring counties to get their merchandise in front of potential customers and try to make a sale. Late winter when the wind is howling and the temperature drops in the teens is not exactly a booming time for the sellers. This was a way to try to help stimulate the farm sales economy, maybe just a little.

In the late winter and early spring we also offered a program that came home to its origins again, the Horse College. This consists of various educational topics relating to horses and horse ownership. It was offered over 4 evenings, spread over 5 weeks. Topics this year included Broodmare Nutrition and Pre-Foaling Care, Foaling Preparation and New Foal Care Basics, Spring Pasture Preparation and Weed Control, and What Can We Feed Our Horses.

I have worked with River Cities Harvest for many years. It has been a rewarding and productive relationship for the past twelve years. River Cities Harvest works by collecting food and then distributing it to local food pantries, the Community Kitchen and several shelters, including Safe Harbor.



Chicks from the Egg Hatching Project.

When I started working with RCH, the annual food distribution was about 50,000 lbs. annually. This past year, RCH distributed 541,665 lbs. of food, and using the per lb. value assigned to collected food by Feeding America of \$1.72 per lb., the value of that collected and re-distributed food was \$931,663.80. In addition to the food value, funds were also raised that were used to help offset operating expenses and to purchase animal protein that is always in high demand and in short supply, due to the cost. And this is all without any direct government funds.

We were again also involved with the annual egg hatching project in local schools where we supply most of the incubators and all of the eggs, which we get from the UK research farm. This past year we were in 8 schools, both Boyd County and Ashland, and distributed 22 dozen eggs.

Family & Consumer Sciences

For the second year, the Boyd County Extension Homemakers volunteered to decorate the entire Highlands Museum and Discovery Center in downtown Ashland. This historical landmark is well known in the area for its children's activity center as well as the wonderful displays on Appalachian life. Many community members visit the museum each holiday season and it has become a popular holiday attraction for the area. The various Extension Homemaker clubs in Boyd County all work



Highlands Museum Decorations.

together starting in late summer to develop their theme for the many trees they decorate within the museum and then they work diligently all during the fall months to make many of the decorations using recycled materials. The Boyd County Extension Homemakers and the Boyd County Extension Service help to play a role in the seasonal community and economic development for the City of Ashland.

Home canning is an excellent way to preserve produce from the garden and enjoy it year round. However, this is a life skill that some younger generations have not been taught. Due to tough economic times, there is increased interest in local food and home gardening. As a result of this increased interest, the Boyd County Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent partnered with the local library to offer a two-day home canning and food preservation workshop. There were a total of 18 participants in each class, many of which were first time canners. The workshop focused on safe food handling practices, preparing fruits/vegetables for preservation, and boiling water bath and pressure canning. During the hands on workshop, participants prepared and canned pickles and green beans. Research based publications were distributed to all attendees as well as canning utensils such as lid lifters and funnels. As a result of the program, 94% planned to use safe food preservation techniques learned from the workshop. A grandmother, who brought her 8 year old granddaughter to the program, commented that together they had canned 20 pints of green beans, 6 quarts of pickles, and 6 quarts of tomatoes after attending the food preservation workshop. The grandmother stated that she felt like she "bonded" with her granddaughter while they canned.

Members of the Boyd County Extension Homemakers have met on a weekly basis for several years making mats from plastic grocery bags. The mats they make are then donated to our homeless community so that they will have a waterproof surface to lay on at night. Over the years many mats have been distributed and continue to be distributed throughout our region. This past summer, two of the Homemakers volunteered to share this program and teach how to make these mats to other Extension Homemakers across the state. They had such an interest in others wanting to learn how to make the mats that there was a waiting list to get into the program. The Boyd County Extension Homemakers take pride in their community and especially helping those less fortunate.

Priority Program Efforts

A total of **25** people are now involved in addressing significant community issues.

1294 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming.

A total of **2,677** youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills.

132 individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.

A total of **161** individuals experienced a change in knowledge, opinions, skills or aspirations regarding the safe storage, handling, or preparation of food.

67 local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture.



Food preservation supplies.

