

# EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

## *Changing Lives*

### IN BRACKEN COUNTY

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



*Augusta Independent School students planting the garden.*

### School Garden and Experiments

The Bracken County Extension Service and the Augusta Independent School are working together to raise a garden near the school utilizing plants that grow in the cooler weather. In addition to growing food, the 6th grade science class is conducting an experiment to determine the effect of nitrogen on plant growth and yield.

The children have learned what a soil test will show them about the soil and the fertility needed for a crop. They determined that pH, phosphorus, and potassium are all adequate or above the requirements for the vegetables. This is why they chose nitrogen as their experimental treatment. They helped determine the rate and application method and set up the experimental design. With a control of no added nitrogen and the treatment with added nitrogen, they will be able to evaluate the results using numerous treatments on four different vegetables with both yield and plant size.

In addition to the fertility experiment, they also learned about insects that attack fall crops including the cabbage looper and how to control it safely with food production.

### Priority Program Efforts

- A total of 46 people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
- 11 youth made an impact in their community through service projects
- 34 local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
- 125 Producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
- 150 youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- 504 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- A total of 164 individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- A total of 383 youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
- 41 individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.

## Mobile Dairy Classroom



*Southland Mobile Dairy Classroom at Taylor Elementary.*

With more and more of U.S. consumers becoming 3 or 4 generations removed from the farm, many consumers especially youth don't know where their food is coming from or about production agriculture. Even for youth here in rural Bracken County. Additionally, throughout the county and statewide there has been a decrease in dairy farms over the past several years.

The Bracken County 4-H and FCS agents teamed up to bring the Southland Mobile Dairy Classroom to Taylor Elementary. A total of 615 students plus faculty, staff, and adult volunteers were able to participate in this program. Students learned about the characteristics and anatomy of dairy cows, the importance of dairy foods for good health, modern environmental and food safety practices, and were able to watch the modern milking process. Students enjoyed the visit from "Jett" the dairy cow and experiencing this first hand.

For some students, this was the first time they had ever seen a cow being milked. Based on a survey taken throughout the day, 90% reported that they learned something new. Around 45% had never seen a cow that close up before. Teachers and staff responded after the program stating how great of a need there is for programs like this; so many students don't understand these processes or where food comes from. Based on the positive response this could lead to similar future programming.

## Senior Raised Bed Garden Project

The Bracken County Extension Service works throughout the year with the Licking Valley Community Senior Center with programs and activities. This year, the coordinator asked about gardening to encourage the participants to enjoy an outdoor activity. Since many of the folks have challenges with mobility, a garden that would allow them access was necessary.

With the help of the Bracken County High School Ag Construction Class, a raised bed was built with the dimensions 4' x 8' and 3' tall. This would allow the seniors to tend to the garden without the need to bend over and they would be able to reach across from both sides of the raised bed to work with the plants and harvest the produce. The raised bed was built on the lawn adjacent to the center and within a short walking distance to enable those on walkers or canes to participate as well.

A vinyl material was used to build the raised bed to avoid concerns that treated lumber and food safety can cause. A variety of plants were selected and planted in the bed and the resulting harvest will be used in meals or for the participants to take home. This project will provide the senior citizens with a physical activity, an outdoor experience, and the chance to grow their own, healthy food.



*Volunteers working in the Senior Citizens Raised Bed.*

## Taste of the Month



*B.C.M.S. student receiving a blueberry muffin during lunch.*

According to the CDC the average Kentucky adolescent consumes fruits 1.0 per day and vegetables 1.1 per day. To try to increase this amount to what is needed each day for adolescents the Bracken County Family and Consumer Science Agent teamed up with the Bracken County Middle School and the Family Resource Youth Service Center to implement a program called, "Taste of the Month" to all middle school students.

In Bracken County Middle School, there are three grades, totaling 298 students and 30 staff members. A recipe from the Plate it Up! Kentucky Proud Program was prepared and offered to students during lunch, once a month for five months. Seventy percent (70%) of the students tried the samples and recipes regularly.

At the end of the program a post survey was completed to see if an impact on the students' food choices was made. According to the survey, 67% of the students stated they tried a fruit or vegetable during the program that they had never had before. When asked if they would continue to try new fruits and vegetables because of the program, 74% of the students said they would. Students voted on their favorite recipe of the five that were prepared and the Blueberry Cream Cheese Cake won by a whopping 80%. The other four recipes made up the 20%. We hope that this will instill in the students the importance of continuing to consume fruit and vegetables daily.

## Onsite 4-H Camp Counselor Training

The Kentucky 4-H Camping Program prides itself on the many opportunities that it is able to provide youth throughout the summer months. It is more than just a fun week filled with outdoor activities; it is a series of educational experiences that have a positive impact on the development of the youth who attend. While at camp these youth learned valuable life skills such as responsibility, independence, character building, and the ability to work with others. In order to make this a positive experience and make a lasting impact, we rely heavily on the Camp Staff and most importantly our volunteers. Prior training and experience before arriving at camp is crucial to the success of our camp week. This past summer our camp group brainstormed different ways to deliver this training in order to make it more beneficial and provide real life situations that may occur during the camp week. Together we planned and executed a one day training for our teen and adult counselors which took place onsite at North Central 4-H Camp. Counselors were able to receive hands on training, explore different areas of camp, work together, and bond as a camping group. As a result, our counselors were more prepared for their duties upon arriving, had fewer issues throughout the week, and received positive comments on our camp evaluation. One volunteer commented, "having not been to camp since I was a camper, this was very helpful to be able to re-acclimate myself to camp before Monday morning rolls around with campers. I felt more prepared". Another teen counselor said that it was an awesome experience to also have time to meet and bond with volunteers from other counties that they will be working with throughout the week. Overall, it was a great success and we are hoping to continue and improve this training for next summer and many more.



## 4-H, Sew Much Fun!



*2016 Bracken 4-H Sewing Project participants.*

Based on a program survey, the need and interest to have a sewing program series was identified. Shannon Smith and Rebecca Neltner teamed up to offer a five-week Sewing Series this past Spring. Developing life skills and crafting skills such as sewing have been shown to increase hand/eye coordination, improve critical thinking skills, and helps develop creative thinkers. Learning to sew produces a sense of confidence and accomplishment in youth as they learn new skills and complete projects. It also gives youth the opportunity to understand textiles, construction techniques, and design principles.

There were eight young ladies who signed up to learn basic sewing techniques, how to use a sewing machine, pick out material for their projects, ironing, read a pattern, and complete simple projects each week. Youth completing the 5 week sewing series, successfully made a pillow case, drawstring bag, and a fabric basket. This Series also allowed the opportunity to bring some new volunteers into the program. Each week eight ladies volunteered their time.

At the end of the five-week series, several participants commented that they would be interested in furthering their sewing skills by participating in future programs. One young lady even asked for a sewing machine for her birthday, so she could continue to practice the skills that she had learned during the sewing series at home. Plans are being made to offer a similar series in the Fall and maybe continue to grow into a club that would meet regularly each month.

## The Bracken County Cattlemen's Association

With the effort of a few, very dedicated volunteers, the Bracken County Cattlemen's Association is now up and running. Since the decline in the tobacco industry, farmers in Bracken County knew that the very best option was to improve the production and efficiency of their cattle operations. With the topography and forage resources available, just enhancing what we already have, made the most sense. For many years, we had 15 to 20 paid members of the state cattlemen's association, but no activities or county organization.

Now with the drastic change in the marketplace, folks are eager to learn more about what they can do to enhance their management and market opportunities. With the emphasis of education and member activities, many folks have signed up as members with the County Association. Since our first meeting in July of 2016, we now have 125 members. This was achieved by the grass roots effort of leaders making calls, visits and knocking on doors to market the benefits of membership.



**University of Kentucky**  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
*Cooperative Extension Service*  
Bracken County

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For more information,  
Please contact us at:  
1120 Brooksville Germantown Road  
Brooksville, KY 41004  
(606) 735-2141  
Fax: (606) 735-3871  
[www.ca.uky.edu](http://www.ca.uky.edu)



College of Agriculture,  
Food Science, and  
Sustainable Systems