Changing Lives
IN BREATHITT COUNTY

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

As highly processed foods become more common and home prepared meals become less common, the children in Eastern Kentucky become even more removed from the source of their food. Pumpkin Days at RCARS is part of Mountain Ag Week which allows children aged 3 – 6 and their parents an up close and personal look at how their food grows. In September 2014, 925 youth and 490 teachers and parents got an authentic educational experience while participating in Pumpkin Days. Much more than a simple visit to a pumpkin patch, the day included many activity stations where the students learned how food grows. 90% of the students increased knowledge of nutrition and health, and 96% of the students had a first-time, hands-on experience at one or more of the activity stations. 100% had an authentic experience of picking their very own pumpkin from the field where it grew! Another success of the day is that over 70 county agents, University specialists, administrators, farm technicians, support staff, community partners and volunteers work to make the event happen.

Priority Program Efforts

A total of 20 people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
15 youth made an impact in their community through service projects
25 Producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
35 youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
38 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming

A total of 255 individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health

A total of 25 youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills

5 individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.
**Agriculture & Natural Resources**

*Ty Back*

*County Extension Agent*

**Rain Garden**

This year Breathitt County ANR Agent hosted a one-day workshop on building a rain garden. The workshop began with a classroom session and ended with hands-on building of a rain garden, all led by University of Kentucky Water Quality Extension Specialist. Eight participants took part in the workshop and in the end, completed a rain garden at Douthitt Park located in Jackson, near the North Fork of the Kentucky River. The demonstration Rain Garden is positioned near the entrance of the park and along the walking track, where more than one hundred park patrons pass it on a daily basis. The rain garden contains informational signage on its purpose and construction. Employees at the park say that the rain garden draws someone’s attention almost daily. It has also been used on numerous occasions to encourage homeowners to construct their own rain gardens in hopes of preventing some of the pollutants from entering our precious waterways.

**Artificial Insemination in Small Herds**

The Breathitt County Extension ANR Agent, along with a UK Beef Specialist, offered a class on Artificial Insemination (AI) and it’s benefits. Eight producers participated in the class and four have expressed interest in piloting an AI program on their farm. One producer has worked with the agent and has bred 100% of his heifers artificially in 2014. Three more producers have committed to artificially breeding on their next breeding cycle.

The agent is currently recruiting other producers in the area to begin artificially inseminating their herds as well.

**The Garden Stick**

The Garden Stick idea was born in a planning session for a gardening program called Grow Breathitt County. This program helps 30 families plan, plant, and maintain a garden from tillage through harvest. One of the most important issues when planning a garden is proper spacing, proper planting depth, and the correct number of plants per person needed.

During the planning session, the Breathitt County ANR Agent, along with Robinson Center Director, talked about having this information at the grower’s fingertips. Something not only families in the program could use, but gardeners everywhere. Through this session an idea of an engraved, four-sided, one-square-inch, three-foot-long informational stick was born. Each side is filled with research based data from University of Kentucky Publication ID-128 on proper plant spacing (along with a ruler marked in one inch increments), planting depth, number of plants per family and planting dates.

The Garden Stick has also been designed to be used when tying tomatoes or other vegetables. It is currently being manufactured at the University of Kentucky Woodcenter.

As you can see, the ANR Program has been busy this year and will continue to provide educational opportunities for the people of Breathitt County for years to come. Thank you for your support and participation in our programs.

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**4-H Youth Development**

*Jessica Ritchie*

*County Extension Agent*

**Students Learn Safety at Summer Day Camp**

In an effort to educate Breathitt County youth about various areas of safety, 4-H partnered with several community organizations to host a summer day camp for youth right before the school year started back. Over 150 youth, teens, and adult volunteers attended this event, where they learned about ATV, bicycle, fire, food, and health safety. The students also got to enjoy the day with inflatables and use of the local splash park. Each participant also went home with a backpack of school supplies and safety items, and a bicycle helmet. The goal of the event was to create safety awareness among all ages, and this was met by observing the discussion and actions the students put into practice throughout the day of the event, and hopefully in the days to come!
Robotics Continues to Grow

The Breathitt 4-H Robotics program began last summer through a grant opportunity that allowed supplies to be purchased and a day camp to take place. Since that time, the program has expanded and over 100 youth have been able to participate in robotics programs through after-school programs and additional summer camps. There has also been a semester-long class at a local middle school on Career Choices and Project-Based Learning. Through this hands-on experience, youth have been able to expand creativity, explore the scientific process, and work on communications, teambuilding and leadership. These students have excelled in building projects and programming them for various tasks. We look forward to continuing to expand this project, and the creative minds, of Breathitt County youth!

Students really enjoy building robots.

Thank you to all of those who continue to support our Breathitt 4-H Corndog fundraiser each year! This year was our largest sales to date, selling around 7,200 corndogs. All of the proceeds from this event goes towards sending Breathitt County youth to camps, conferences and various leadership events throughout the year.

Shown here is the man behind the famous 4-H corndogs, Mr. Jack Niece. Mr. Niece began the fundraiser many years ago and he still enjoys a crispy, 4-H corn dog!

Family & Consumer Sciences

Martha Yount
County Extension Agent

MANNERS THAT WORK

In a world of increasingly tight economics, the competition for employment is especially hard for young workers or others new to the workforce. Personal manners and self-presentation may make the difference between being hired for a job (or selected for a scholarship or other opportunity) or not. Input from the Family Court Judge, other local business leaders and the Family and Consumer Sciences Advisory Council led to the development of a program called "Manners That Work," now offered for several years. Existing FCS and 4-H publications were combined with hands-on activities used with drug court participants, Youth Build Job Readiness participants, and middle and high school students for a total audience of 263. Topics included making a good first impression with a firm handshake during introductions, basic table manners, hygiene and personal grooming, and selecting appropriate clothing for various situations. Following the sessions, participants were able to demonstrate a positive handshake, demonstrate appropriate table manners, and sort photos into categories describing appropriate clothing selection. Although no formal follow up data was gathered, personal contact later identified 5 participants in gainful employment and 8 students selected for leadership/scholarship opportunities or academic honors.

Focus on Family Clubs

Issues with parenting and family strengthening always ran in the top three needs of our county by the Family and Consumer Sciences Advisory Council, as well as the County Extension Council. Beginning in our last program year, more family-centered learning opportunities were offered by the Extension Service. To continue addressing this need, two new Focus on Family Extension Homemaker Clubs were created. "The Wild Bunch," for families with young children, uses the curriculum "Growing Up Wild" outdoor nature education. Throughout the year, families involved in the club participated in monthly meetings based on the curriculum, and participated in a field trip to Robinson Forest. The culminating activity for the year was an "Almost Camp Out" to encourage families to spend more time outdoors. Camping can be an inexpensive way for families to spend time...
Together, increase physical activity, and become more aware of their impact on the environment. Informal discussions with participants indicated that over 50% of the children had started spending more time outdoors, and reduced their time in front of the computer and television screens. A second club, “Dad and Me Chefs”, is a cooking club for fathers and their children. The monthly meeting included hands-on food preparation activities, as well as information on food safety and nutrition. It also encouraged fathers to spend more time engaged in activities with their children. Observation by the agent showed increased confidence in both youth and adult participants with measuring and knife skills as the year progressed. Additional impact data will be gathered as the clubs continue into their second year.

The Nutrition lesson that was recently taught to a Preschool class focused on the importance of eating fruits for proper growth and development. A book was read, called The Very Hungry Caterpillar. After reading and discussing the book, the children were asked if they would like to eat a caterpillar. Before any of the children had time to answer one child said, “You’re silly, you can’t eat caterpillars!” The children all laughed and then it was explained to them that they would be making Grape Caterpillar Kabobs. The children really enjoyed making the healthy snack and said it was delicious.

**Program Assistant**

A Cake Decorating Day Camp was recently offered to the youth of Breathitt County. This was the second Day Camp on this topic offered, as the first was such a big success. Youth were able to make their cupcakes and decorate them as well. They learned many different decorating tips and techniques for making cakes or cupcakes look great.

**Nutrition Education Program**

**Shown here is a finished cupcake from one of the participants.**

A family at the “Almost Camp Out,” roasting marshmallows.

Students enjoying their Grape Caterpillar Kabobs.

“You’re silly, you can’t eat caterpillars!”

- Student