Changing Lives

IN CALLOWAY COUNTY

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

The Calloway County Cooperative Extension Service continues its mission to bring research-based information from both land grant institutions (University of Kentucky & Kentucky State University) to local individuals and families. As we reflect on the past year, it is apparent that Cooperative Extension continues to make strides in serving a diverse group of clientele. Although we continue to meet the needs of rural populations, we are also hosting numerous programs that serve those living in more urbanized areas. Extension provides programs in the various areas of agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development and community and economic development. We hope that you will take time to review the programs highlighted in this report and we look forward to seeing you at one of our programs soon!

Priority Program Efforts

- A total of 275 people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
- 20 local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
- 26 Producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
- 3,452 youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- 1,125 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- A total of 4,255 individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- A total of 1,125 youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
- 40 individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.

Calloway County Extension Office: Where a Host of Opportunities Awaits the Community
A new undertaking for the collaboration for 2013 is the adoption of four streams in Calloway County to be explored and tested by 4-H youth and adults in May, July and September. These sites will be sampled for nutrients and evaluated for their habitat and their biological health. Four adults have been trained to assist the youth in the sampling of these streams. The youth are excited and enjoy the chemistry portions as well as just exploring local streams for critters. This is a part of the Watershed Watch Teams and will gleam new knowledge for the youth and data to be shared with this volunteer arm of the Division of Water. Youth and adults attended a weekend overnight at the Hancock Biological Center to prepare to sample and explore the streams. This is a great beginning to positive life-long love of our environment for the youth and adults involved. The six thousand dollars received through this Toyota Water Grant has reached more than 5,718 people and will be utilized in learning settings in the future with even more.

**Murray Calloway Robotics Team – The Robo Racers**

Murray and Calloway County High School Students have become excited about creating and maneuvering robots through the First Robotic Competition. These thirty-three youth, along with their mentors, did more than they thought imaginable as they competed in their third regional First Robotics Competition in Knoxville, Tennessee. These youth were pitted with and against some of the most competitive teams in the nation. Grants were obtained from JC Penney, the National 4-H Foundation, the Kentucky 4-H Foundation, and NASA over a three year period of time. These grants, totaling $19,750, enabled these youth to step into a world beyond their wildest dreams and compete with honor and gracious professionalism. This was an amazing season for our seniors, who showed great leadership and communication skills as they designed, built and maneuvered the robot. According to a college research study, youth involved in First Robotics are more likely to major in engineering, to finish college, and to volunteer in their community. In the past three years, our Murray Calloway County 4-H Robotics team has graduated fourteen students; nine of the fourteen are majoring in some form of engineering. Three students have already come back to mentor our team. Ten students have obtained exciting opportunities in college, in part, due to their experiences on our team 3843. One student is at Stanford in California and has had a research internship at Harvard for the summer. Team 3843 is still building capacity and working to establish a business plan that will serve the community well. Feel free to check out the team website at [www.team3843.com](http://www.team3843.com)!

**Skate Park Becomes a Reality**

Murray and Calloway County has dreamed of a skate park for our community youth for more than 10 years. Calloway County 4-H leaders and the 4-H agent have served on the Community Education Council since 2000. This group has participated in community forums that have helped work to make this skate park a reality. The initial components of the park were installed in the fall of 2012. This collaborative effort has been realized with the help of many groups, individuals and organizations. Youth now have a safe place to skate and bike in the Murray Calloway County Park System. Dreams come true with a lot of hard work and community policy development.
Public Value of Quality Parenting Programs

It takes a “village” (community) to adequately support families in rearing children. Everyone who takes a parenting role has at some point the intention of loving children and doing a good job of rearing them. Raising a family is a strenuous, long-lasting job at best. Calloway Cooperative Extension has helpful resources to offer.

4-H Speeches and Demonstrations

According to the Search Institute, the lifelong mastery of communication and decision making are lacking in 53% of young people. In its five years, Kentucky 4-H and Communication Clubs have thrived at Southwest Elementary School. More than 90% of the students participated and learned new skills in communication, maps, and other important Kentucky Heritage skills. All fourth and fifth graders from Southwest Elementary and Murray Elementary presented a speech and a demonstration for a classroom grade. 98% of fifth grade students at North Elementary presented a speech for classroom competition. All students were eligible to participate in the county 4-H contest. 4-H speeches and demonstrations increased students’ personal knowledge of their chosen subject and gave the 5th graders a positive experience in a public speaking setting prior to middle school.

The 4-H Country Ham Project is another opportunity to gain public speaking skills. Twenty-five percent of participating Calloway County 4-Hers qualified for the Call Backs. Of the twelve participants, seven participants qualified in the top five of their age division and category for ham, presentation, or overall. Calloway County returned home with Class Champions for the nine-year-old, 15-year-old, and 17-18-year-old divisions. Strengthened confidence in communication skills is a great part of the Calloway County 4-H Program.

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FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Area-Wide Clothing Leader Training

Each year the Purchase Area Master Clothing Volunteers and the Family & Consumer Sciences Extension Agent host a 4-H Sewing Train-the-Trainer Workshop. After implementing an organized 4-H sewing program in Calloway County seven years ago, it was realized that volunteer leaders were teaching the students various ways of making the same techniques. This became frustrating to both the leaders and students. Therefore, a train-the-trainer workshop was implemented to teach Calloway County Clothing Leaders the proper techniques of sewing garments and projects. The techniques taught are aligned with the judging rules in 4-H garment construction. Recognizing the same issues existed in other counties; clothing leaders from all of district seven were invited to the annual training. As a result of these annual trainings, Calloway County’s sewing program ran more smoothly with all of the 20 clothing leaders teaching the same techniques. McCracken County began a sewing program modeled after Calloway County’s sewing program. The Purchase Area Master Clothing Volunteers and contact agent assisted Hickman County in beginning a 4-H sewing program. A 4-H Sewing Club was started in Livingston County and Graves County’s 4-H sewing program continues to thrive and grow.

Sara Counts, Purchase Area Master Clothing Volunteer, demonstrates serger techniques to some of the 30 Clothing Leader Training participants.
Farm to School Program Teaches Food’s Origins

Over the course of six years, the Calloway County Extension volunteer LEAP (Literacy, Eating, and Activity for Preschool/Primary) Leaders and respective classroom teachers have expressed that most children do not understand the origin of food. In addition, the Calloway County School System ranks at 60% free and reduced lunches. The economic recession has also made families find ways to stretch food dollars. Therefore, the Calloway County Cooperative Extension Service decided to participate in the Farm to School grant two years ago, along with the Calloway County Health Department, and the Calloway County Schools’ Food Service Director. As a result, Calloway County Cooperative Extension Service continued the education component of the program during the 2012-2013 school year. The SNAP-ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) Assistant led the subsequent educational opportunities. These included seven in-school 4th grade science classes and four after-school Environmental Clubs. Students learned from where food comes, the importance of buying local at the Farmers’ Market, what Kentucky Proud means when purchasing produce, and the importance of and how to recycle and reuse items and produce. Many students have encouraged their families to begin recycling at home. Others reported learning that everything that is used, eaten, and drank is produced in some way by a farmer. Many students now try more fruits and vegetables, now that they know how much work goes into growing them. The Farm to School initiative has helped families learn how to plant and harvest produce and gain access to nutritious food.

“Farm to School is a wonderful program! It also meets the Kentucky Core Standards.”
- 4th Grade Teacher

Literacy & Nutrition Go Hand in Hand

The University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service’s LEAP Program (Literacy, Eating, and Activity for Preschoolers/Primary) has been a leading program in Calloway County. It was implemented by the Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent seven years ago to help combat Calloway County’s obesity rate of 18%. Research has also shown that there is a natural link between nutrition, physical activity, and reading. Last year, the LEAP program touched the lives of 850 students, which, in turn, teaches their classroom teachers and families. A book is read to encourage literacy and the students try a new snack related to the story to encourage healthy eating habits. A newsletter goes home to the families, which includes a recipe and activities that tie the literacy and nutrition together. Written evaluations were returned by parents and teachers. One parent stated that she has seen much improvement in her child’s eating habits over the past five months. Another said that her child’s pediatrician wanted her Body Mass Index to be lowered. This, of course, can only be done with healthy eating habits and physical activity. As a result of the LEAP program, her BMI decreased two points. The teachers have stated that the LEAP program compliments their nutrition unit and core content very well. The Calloway County Early Childhood Council and the Purchase Area Head Start Policy Council writes the LEAP program into their grants and reports each year.

Fourth and fifth grade students visit the Stahler Dairy and Poultry Farm as a part of the Farm to School program.

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