

# EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Changing Lives*

## IN CLAY COUNTY

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



### Clay County: Making a Difference in the Lives of All Residents



The Clay 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. We continue to meet the needs of rural populations. 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

- ◆ **109** people are involved in addressing significant committee issues and **208** volunteer hours were generated by community and economic development programs.
- ◆ **86** producers adopted resource management technologies as a result of Extension programs.
- ◆ A total of **84** producers reported an increase awareness of sustainable agriculture practices.
- ◆ **106** youth indicated increased leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs.
- ◆ A total of **159** individuals reported understanding the benefits of spending time together in physical activity.
- ◆ **1,369** youth and adults gained knowledge about eating healthy foods.
- ◆ **67** individuals adopted one or more practices related to conserving, sustaining and/or protecting soil resources.
- ◆ **230** individuals made lifestyle changes for the purpose of improving their health.
- ◆ **528** youth and adults demonstrated increased practical living skills learned through Extension programming.
- ◆ A total of **232** adults reported an increase in knowledge, opinions, skills or aspirations related to money management.

## Clay County Farmers' Market

The Clay County Extension Council and the Clay County Agriculture Advisory Council have pressed the agriculture community the past two years to get a farmers' market revitalized. In response, this spring the Clay County Agriculture Advisory Council resolved to target specific vegetable producers to sell at the market. At an organizational meeting, producers agreed to try to sell, so market rules, a constitution and by-laws were adopted. The City of Manchester helped secure a visible site for the market. The Clay County Cooperative Extension Service staff offered a homebased microprocessor training so vendors could expand offerings to the general public.



The community was very supportive of the farmers' market and very excited about access to quality produce grown locally. With twelve sale dates and fifteen vendors, the market sold over \$10,000 of fresh produce, crafts, flowers and baked goods. Plans are underway for next year to make the market more professional and to increase the number of vendors.



## Preserving Your Food

Clay County lives in a food desert. We have limited options for accessing nutritious foods, increasing families need to stretch food dollars and to prepare and consume healthy nutritious meals.



Three Food Preservation Workshops were presented contacting 108 participants. Extension Service worked cooperatively with Grow Appalachia and Promise Neighborhood to present these programs. Five months after the programs were completed and gardens harvested, evaluations

showed 4,027 quarts of produce were canned for consumption in the winter months. Produce preserved were green beans, tomatoes, corn, peppers, jellies, and pickles, saving the consumer \$18,646.01. This allowed them to stretch their food dollars and increase the consumption of nutritious foods grown in their own gardens. Fifteen families received a pressure canner, water bath canner, utensils for canning and a set of canning jars. Thirty participants in the class got to take home pint jars of green beans, jelly, salsa and pickles.



Comments from participants: *"I am no longer afraid of the pressure canner."* *"I loved this hands-on class, canning food with Mom."* *"Got a clear understanding of how to use jars and canners."* *"My children have learned how to can."* *"A good refresher class."* *"I loved your program."* *"I watched my grandmother can and am now going to try it myself."* A classic youth comment: *"I had to get up early for this program, it was almost worth it!"*

## Clay County Fair

Clay County has had a resurgence of community pride and reinvestment in the last two years. One example of this was the desire within the community for a county fair. Clay County Cooperative Extension Service staff were approached about co-sponsoring the endeavor.

Clay County Agents (Agriculture, Family & Consumer Science, 4-H) and community partners sponsored the first Clay County Fair in 30 years. Agents attended Fair Board meetings and recruited



judges and volunteers to conduct 4-H, FCS, and Ag exhibits. All told, there were 150 exhibits entered. It is likely there will be many more exhibits next year because of all the positive



comments that were made by attendees. Other activities for the fair included booths, local crafts and food (cottage industry) creating income for local entrepreneurs. There was also a parade which created family time. The 4-H Teen Club had a float titled “4-H Camp: Then and Now”. Agriculture and 4-H were highlighted by the 4-H Livestock Judging Clinic/Skillathon, and an Antique Tractor Show reaching 52 students and 10 leaders volunteering.

The entire fair was held at our EXCEL facility. This introduced new clientele to Extension, and will provide opportunities for community engagement and involvement in the future.



Approximately 1,000 people attended the 3 day event, not including the large amount of parade attendees. Plans are already underway for next year’s county fair.

### Truth & Consequences: The Choice is Yours

Clay County has an ongoing culture problem of drug use and abuse. There is a strong need for substance abuse education and



prevention. To this end, Extension partnered with Clay County High School, fourteen local government agencies and twenty-four volunteers to do a Truth & Consequences: The Choice is Yours program. One hundred twenty-nine high school seniors went through a scenario based role-playing exercise and were educated about the physical, legal, financial and emotional consequences of substance abuse. Students took pre and post surveys and these will be used in subsequent years to measure long-term community impact. Community volunteers were pleased with the immediate results and their role in helping students experience the truth and consequences of substance abuse. Many volunteers expressed a desire to participate in this program again.

### Speeches & Demonstrations



Providing youth with the ability to enhance and develop communication skills is of great importance in Kentucky. The development of communications skills is one of the preeminent skills necessary to grow as an individual, a community member and a leader. Using age appropriate activities selected from the approved Kentucky 4-H Communications & Expressive Arts Curriculum, educators can maximize the ability of youth to develop their writing, reading and personal communication capacities. This in turn creates a solid foundation for positive youth development (Jones, K. R. 2006)

Twenty five students participated in our County Communications day. One hundred percent of the students researched a topic, wrote an outline, practiced in front of someone before the event, improved their public speaking, gained confidence in themselves, and improved their relationship with the adult that helped them prepare, according to a post evaluation. Five adult volunteers also made the event possible. Without these adults this event could not have taken place. One of these volunteers was a former participant in this event. Following the event, she said *“It is more rewarding to help better someone else’s life than work on your own, and events such as these definitely make that possible.”* We had 224 students in 5th grade school clubs that used the communications and public speaking curriculum.

We would like to congratulate the young lady pictured above. Grace Sink won 3rd runner up in the National FFA Creed Speaking Contest this year!

## Environmental Camp

**T**welve million acres, 47 percent of Kentucky's 25,425,904 acres, are covered in forest. Kentucky lost more than 700,000



acres of forest between 1988 and 2004, mostly due to the conversion of forest for development purposes. Of the 12 million acres of forest, 11.6

million acres are classified as timberland. Clay County has just over 300,000 acres of land with approximately 256,000 acres of forest land. To increase awareness of the surrounding environment for young people, Clay County 4-H Youth Development implemented an Environmental Camp at Clay County High School in Manchester. With the help of the KY Department of Fish and Wildlife, KY Furbearers, UK Cooperative Extension, and NRCS over 60 elementary students from Manchester Elementary had a full day of events. Students managed through stations ranging from water quality, wildlife, tree measurement and identification, soils, and a cleanup scavenger hunt. Students learned how to better protect their environment, understand the value of renewable and non-renewable resources, and the importance of forests in an ecosystem. Over 70% of students understood the difference between a renewable and non-renewable resource. All of the teachers were very pleased to see that the information the students learned reinforced classroom lessons and gave them real, hands on

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experience. One of the teachers involved was so impressed with the event, they joined the 4-H Council. Once again our high school 4-H club had approximately



20 students that stepped up and led some of the stations for the younger students. It was a great experience for the high school students as well as the elementary students. One of the high school students said *"There's nothing like explaining a simple and compound leaf to a group of children and seeing their eyes light up just because of the knowledge they have gained. The things I have seen, heard, or been able to share with others will stick with me the rest of my life."* We also used the day to help prepare the high school Envirothon students. The professionals in their fields all gave demonstrations and lectures to all of the high school participants as well.

This year we made an accommodation for the largest elementary school in the county. With the previous location being such a long distance from this school, we moved the location to the neighboring high school property. This school has more diversity than any other in the county. Making extra efforts such as this is necessary to see improvement in an overall county 4-H program.

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**The Clay County  
Cooperative  
Extension Service**

*Extending Knowledge,  
Changing Lives*

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