Changing Lives

IN GARRARD COUNTY

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

High tunnels encompass a crop growing system that fits somewhere between row covers and greenhouses. They are relatively inexpensive (about $1.30/sq. ft, excluding labor), permitting entry into high tunnel crop production with limited capital. This system is particularly appealing to new-entry growers who utilize retail-marketing channels. (Penn State University CES)

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Commercial Vegetable Production

Dependence on tobacco has been decreasing and farmers have begun to diversify into vegetable production. The Cooperative Extension Service has been the leading source of information and training for new producers. Multicounty High Tunnel Academy and Vegetable Production meetings were held in Lincoln County. Attendees learned new production practices in both the high tunnel and outdoor plasticulture. Ninety-percent of the producers reported they gained knowledge in vegetable production. Seventy-five percent said they were likely to change their practices at home because of information received at the meetings. Producers size ranged from a couple of acres up to as many as 40 acres.

Priority Program Efforts

70 youth made an impact in their community through service projects
80 local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
60 Producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
120 youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
275 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
A total of 30 individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
A total of 375 youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
80 individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.
Fruits and Vegetables

The Garrard County Cooperative Extension Service continually receives inquiries about home fruit production and control of diseases and insects. The Cooperative Extension Service utilized University of Kentucky Extension Specialists and other Cooperative Extension agents to conduct educational classes on fruit production, fruit tree grafting, disease control and insect control. There were 24 participants from five different counties in attendance. Lunch was provided with the menu being Kentucky Proud products grown in the area. Evaluations filled out by participants indicated that 100% of those attending increased their knowledge of the subjects and use it to change practices at home. Sixty-six percent of those attending returned from last year's program and stated the knowledge learned has enabled them to raise healthier produce. Participants surveyed stated they were able to reduce their monthly food purchases during the summer months by more than $100 per household because they can produce their own fruit and vegetables with knowledge they learned from the program. The survey also showed 90% of the grafted fruit trees lived the first year and 80% lived through the second year.

Tobacco Transplants

There are many diseases and insects that can infect the tobacco transplant while in the greenhouse. New fungicide labeling has enabled farmers to produce healthier transplants and have a higher percentage of live plants to take to the tobacco patch. With knowledge gained from meetings, newsletters and one-on-one consultations from the Garrard County Cooperative Extension Service, farmers are now growing healthier transplants than in previous years. One farmer reported that with the increase in live and healthier plants, he now produces 100% of his total needs, saving him from having to purchase 5 additional acres at a cost of $1500.00. Another producer that sells over 500 acres of tobacco plants reports he has increased his live population in the greenhouse from 82% to 92%. This gain in population relates to having 50 more acres to sell in the same amount of greenhouse space he has available.

“The cordial quality of pear or plum
Ascends as gladly in a single tree
As in broad orchards resonant with bees;”
- Ralph Waldo Emerson
4-H Youth Development

The tradition of 4-H, founded in strong agricultural principles, and the new direction and trends of 4-H, incorporating science, engineering, and technology, are never in more cohesion than Garrard County. 4-H participants engage in a broad range of activities from livestock husbandry and management to building simple circuits and understanding geologic time concepts through stream and river erosional patterns. 4-H embeds the philosophy of hands-on, experiential learning in a positive, impact driven model with youth and adults working together to incorporate a wide spectrum of disciplines. This branching out, yet clinging to, enforces the necessity of history and the expectation of the future. Community and Project Clubs, such as livestock and shooting sports, provide leadership development opportunities to youth in those programs, while in-school enrichment programs give practical application to school lessons while maintaining a direct connection to 4-H.

(Above) 78 Students at Camp Dick Robinson Elementary prepare to launch a homemade rocket to deliver a food payload to make-believe island. This activity discusses complex aerospace ideas in a simple hands-on manner. Engineering and problem-solving were accomplished, as a result of this activity. (Below) 48 4-H and ROAR, a summer school program, participants study aquatic macroinvertebrates during a summer canoeing trip down the Elkhorn Creek in Frankfort, KY.

During an overnight middle school retreat, Garrard County 4-H members learned some basic survival skills, such as fire building. The class was a huge success, because everyone was able to actually participate in making fire, looking at shelter sites, and looking at some local edible plants.

Long-standing programs, such as 4-H summer camp, are as impactful and meaningful as any multi-month programming in schools or in community clubs. The 4-H Camping experience builds relationships, fosters independence and a sense of community worth, creates teamwork, and facilitates a healthy growth of the individual at an individual pace. The rewards of camping are lifelong and memorable.

Two Cloverbuds (5-8-years-old) take to the water during summer Cloverbud Camp. This camp provides younger 4-H participants the opportunity to go to camp for a shorter period of time to get used to the program before moving on to longer sessions. Garrard County had more than 20 youth and parents attend the three-day, two-night camping session.
Family and Consumer Sciences

This past year, there were 1624 SNAP cases in Garrard County. These participants are the target audience of cooking classes held every month using recipes and suggestions from the Food And Nutrition Calendar produced at the University of Kentucky every year. Held twice--once in the daytime and once in the evening on a monthly basis, the cooking classes are open to everyone. Seniors living on fixed income make up the bulk of the participants, along with mothers and grandmothers responsible for cooking meals at home for family. This past year another audience has emerged--the interested teenager in future career as a chef. Family Consumer Science Extension focuses on seven initiatives; accessing nutritious food and making lifestyle choices that influence health and well being in a positive manner are just two of the initiatives that influence the monthly cooking classes. Promotion, planning, shopping for supplies and materials needed every month and preparation and teaching the classes is the responsibility of the FCS agent.

Informal evaluation has been gathered with monthly testimonials from participants anxious to report on their own versions of recipes and family reactions. There have also been in-class knowledge learned such as cooking and preparing food terminology found in recipes and food columns from papers and magazines. So often unless a student has had a formal cooking class, they do not know what terms mean such as 'folding in', 'zesting', or 'broiling'. Eighty-five percent of participants have reported making recipes at home following the cooking classes. Just one example: the Sweet Potato Bread was a favorite after we discussed different versions and how to improve the flavor and consistency. The following month--one participant reported her family now was eating sweet potatoes and didn't even know it.

A participant tries her hand at creating a new dish. By providing hands-on opportunities to make something new from healthier ingredients, people are more likely to introduce those dishes into the home.

A myriad of fruits and vegetables laid out as ingredients for a new, healthier recipe.