Eating from the Garden

According to FoodSafety.gov, one in six Americans gets sick from food poisoning each year. Teaching young people the basics of food safety at a young age could help prevent some illness and health issues during their lives. Cooperative Extension Service offered a “Summer of Salsa” cooking program, developed by Patty Poor, FCS Extension and Lamar Fowler, 4-H Youth Development Agent, to teach people the basics of food safety at a young age. 

The obesity epidemic threatens the quality and years of life of Kentuckians. It is common knowledge that obese individuals are at an increased risk for many chronic health problems, including Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke and some types of cancers. Up to 30% of Kentuckians report zero leisure-time physical activity. When inactivity is combined with an increased consumption of unhealthy foods and stress, we are destined for an obesity problem. We want to decrease the number of obese and overweight individuals within our community. It is important to teach and promote healthy food choices, eating plans and the importance of physical activity to children, as well as adults, to help curb this epidemic.

Priority Program Efforts

A total of 172 people are now involved in addressing significant community issues.
11 local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture.
632 youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs.
1,079 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming.
A total of 58 individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health.
572 individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.

Eating from the Garden Award. This award recognizes a goat producer annually who excels in herd management practices as well as innovative entrepreneurship.

CedarClif Farm began in the mid-seventies when CB purchased a tract of land and some dairy cows on the western side of Grant County. Raising a family and milking cows was the regular way of life until the dairy buyout sent the cows off the farm and the milk tank went dry. In late 2002 the Coopers decided to explore getting some meat goats and it has been uphill since then. Converting many of the older facilities into kidding pens, sick pens and winter feeding options was the beginning. Recognizing that by adding sheep to the operation many of the fixed costs in equipment could be used twice as much if they added the second species. CedarClif farm currently has 300 sheep and goats. Animals are bred to have kids or lambs to achieve market weight. CedarClif Farm of Dry Ridge, KY owned and operated by the Cooper family and milking cows was the regular way of life until the dairy buyout sent the cows off the farm and the milk tank went dry. In late 2002 the Coopers decided to explore getting some meat goats and it has been uphill since then. Converting many of the older facilities into kidding pens, sick pens and winter feeding options was the beginning. Recognizing that by adding sheep to the operation many of the fixed costs in equipment could be used twice as much if they added the second species.

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“Summer of Salsa” is a creative and fun way to combine gardening and cooking in order to develop lifelong skills. Many parents accompanying their children to the program were unaware of correct food safety procedures and learning by doing is an excellent process for retaining information. There were so many positive comments that the program will be repeated in the future. This program was awarded first place in food safety in Kentucky Extension Summer Intern, Rachel Maddon, to show the relationship between growing a garden and then using the produce in recipes using proper food safety procedures. The program was presented through four classes to twelve 4-H youth.

Program objectives were:

* Learn to grow vegetables
* Prepare a container garden
* Prepare recipes featuring vegetables
* Learn food safety
* Use research based materials
* Learn proper knife skills
* Increased consumption of vegetables
* Safely preserving food

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In Grant County, nutrition classes are offered throughout the year by Extension Agents and staff, using “My Plate” resources; health programs such as “Nourishing your Bones & Joints” and the Biggest Winner Program are made available, as well as demonstrations and fresh fruits and vegetables are part of our Farmer’s Market program to encourage healthy choices. To touch the young generation, after school programs, with a focus on physical activities have been established. Long-term benefits of these efforts include management and prevention of chronic disease and an increased awareness of the importance of nutrition and physical activity in daily family life.
Change Your World: Protecting and Beautifying Natural Resources

Grant county has experienced a large influx in growth from Greater Cincinnati and surrounding counties. This influx has led to a large non-rural population with limited knowledge of rural environments, natural resources, and sustaining those for future generations. The Ag Advisory, 4-H, Extension Homemaker and County Extension Councils feel as though a large effort in educational programs must be made in this area to help protect and beautify our county’s natural resources as well as incorporate built environments and walking trails into county plans.

It is important to teach participants to recognize their environmental footprint. Introducing recycling to children will often lead to parents participating in the movement. Information regarding proper pesticides and application techniques is made available to producers. The ability to sew is a fantastic skill set to learn. Not only does it mean ease in replacing buttons or hemming a pair of pants, but a refashioned wardrobe is much cheaper than purchasing new! Sewing requires us to focus, both mentally and physically on a task. It’s hard to sew if you’re worrying about problems at work or what you’ll fix the kids for supper. The most rewarding thing about sewing is the sense of accomplishment and self-esteem booster when a project is complete. To put it simply, picking up a needle of thread is so good for us; it makes us feel good!

Patty Poor, Grant County FCS Agent served on the planning team for the “It’s Sew Fine: Sewing Expo 2013. The expo attracts many college educated women, 69% are over the age of 55. These attendees typically belong to one or more organizations who address issues related to clothing construction, textiles or fiber arts. A majority of participants admit sewing provides an expression of self and creativity, as well as an outlet for stress. As sewers advance their skills, they are able to make gifts for others or even items to sell and help contribute to the family income.

The attendees of the sewing expo report that:

- 100% increased their knowledge by attending the sewing expo.
- 87% have applied the skills learned after attending the expo.
- 61% have taught a skill to others.
- And most agree that the sewing expo provides the means to engage socially with others and that satisfaction flows over to other areas of their life.

For the Love of Sewing

It is important for both youth and adults to develop skills that improve their well-being and help them function effectively within their families. Applying knowledge to real life situations and recognizing potential is essential for adequate contribution to society. The ability to sew is a fantastic skill set to learn. Not only does it mean ease in replacing buttons or hemming a pair of pants, but a refashioned wardrobe is much cheaper than purchasing new! Sewing requires us to focus, both mentally and physically on a task. It’s hard to sew if you’re worrying about problems at work or what you’ll fix the kids for supper. The most rewarding thing about sewing is the sense of accomplishment and self-esteem booster when a project is complete. To put it simply, picking up a needle of thread is so good for us; it makes us feel good!

Success with Silage

It is common knowledge that consumer debt is rising much faster than wages throughout the United States and the situation is no different in Kentucky, and specifically Grant County. As many Grant County farmers are “land rich” but “cash poor”, it is important to make sound financial plans for transitioning to the next generation. Lack of sound personal money management leads to an increase in bankruptcies and has a negative impact on the overall economy of the community. Financial strain, budgeting and long term financial and risk management are key issues within Grant County.

Over the past few years, grain producers in Grant County have experienced record yields and record high prices, much to the chagrin of their neighboring beef producers. As an option to supplement beef enterprises, many Grant County beef producers have also turned to grain production. Beef producers have begun turning corn into silage to provide better weight gains. Unfortunately, cattle producers have experienced a difficulty in making the economics of owning the equipment necessary to raise corn for silage.

In an effort to curb financial issues among Grant County’s farmers, Financial Management classes have been offered as well as Farm Transition courses. It is important that families learn budgeting techniques and strategies for making long term financial plans and investments. Improved record keeping skills, profit/loss statements and decreasing debt to income ratio and increase savings are also discussed.

In an extra measure to help Grant County’s farmers, the Grant County Extension District, lead by Chris Ammerman, applied for a cost-share grant and received funding to purchase a silage bagger. With this high-priced machinery available to local farmers for a daily rental fee, they are able to save time and money. Instead of renting the equipment outside of the county and losing valuable time transporting the machines nearly three hours each way to and from the farms, farmers can utilize a silage bagger, which is housed in the center of the county.

In its first season, Grant County’s silage bagger stuffed over 800 tons of corn into thick walled plastic tubing. The following spring, an additional six producers planted corn acres with the intention of harvesting for silage. In the past three years, producers have ensiled over 5000 tons of silage, storing it in bags. Grant County Cooperative Extension has made it economically possible and time efficient for farmers to invest in silage production without each farmer fronting the cost of the necessary machinery.

“Grant’ing Opportunities for Non-Profits

With a slow recovery of the down-turned economy, many non-profits are having a difficult time staying financially solvent, let alone have the ability to help its clientele. There are several non-profit groups within the county who rely on donations of time, money and items in order to continue their mission. With millions of dollars available for these types of organizations through grants, Grant County Cooperative Extension Service, in conjunction with the UK Cooperative Extension Service, offered a basic Grant Writing Workshop.

The workshop discussed the many different requirements to successfully apply for a grant as well where to look for grant opportunities. The six hour workshop, held over two evenings, had 24 participants from five different counties and represented 17 organizations.

In the evaluations, 100% of the participant felt they had a better understanding of the grant writing process and six organizations planned to submit at least one grant proposal before the end of the 2013 calendar year.