

# EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

## *Changing Lives*



### IN GREEN COUNTY

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



***Green County: Making a Difference in the Lives of all Residents***

The Green County Cooperative Service continues its land grant mission to bring researched based information to the local individuals and families of Green County in the program areas of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Family & Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development and Community & Economic Development.

As we reflect on the past year, it is apparent Cooperative Extension in Green County is successful because of our large volunteer base and support of the local citizens. Through the development of strong leadership, creative and effective programs are developed for the county to improve the quality of life of all our citizens. The Green County Cooperative Extension Service also continues to make strides in serving a diverse group of clientele in our community.

We hope that you will take the 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 **911** people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
- 375** youth made an impact in their community through service projects
- 127** local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
- 173** producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
- 252** youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- 954** citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- A total of **26** individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- A total of **174** youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
- 112** individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.

## **AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **Agriculture 2015**

This past year, the Green County Agricultural and Natural Resources program held several meetings and/or events in different program areas that were a great success for our county in agriculture. Such as a dairy short course, beef course, grain meeting, tobacco meeting, equine meeting, and a forage program. Programs such as these play a big role in Green County's success in agriculture production.

Also in the past year we have seen great dramatic changes in the agriculture markets. Vegetable markets and milk prices have been stable throughout the year. However, grain prices have not been stable. Grain prices have fallen dramatically over the last year to year and a half and seem to have leveled out at low prices. On the other hand the beef markets have been on the rise. The beef market values have been on the rise for about two years and we have seen record prices in the beef industry. However, the last couple of months the beef market has fell and although this was a disappointment to our beef producers, the market is still stable and at a fair price. Tobacco on the other hand has had a year of turmoil. With dramatic cuts to the amount of pounds contracted by the companies and the late notices from the tobacco companies, tobacco producers started out on a rocky road, and as soon as the season got started the road went from rocky to just plain rough because of the extremely wet spring and early summer.

The weather and agriculture markets always play a big part in the success of the producers each year. Although, weather and markets are not always predictable and secure, Green County producers are. There is no doubt that our producers here in Green County are some of the best in the state. Our producers are always striving to be more efficient and more productive no matter what challenges they may face.



*The past two years, beef market prices have been on the rise resulting in record prices.*

### **County Agricultural Investment Program (C.A.I.P.)**

With the ever changing landscape in the agriculture industry, the Green County Agriculture Development Board has been extremely active in using Phase 1 tobacco funding to help producers introduce, improve, and expand their enterprises with the latest techniques and technologies. The Green County board was able to invest \$375,000 in the County Agricultural Investment Program, or C.A.I.P., over the last year to help aid 69 producers. Projects ranged from commodity storage, genetics, farmland improvement, ag diversification, to fencing. With many of the producers investing well more than their 50% required match in the program, over \$750,000 is being invested in Green County agriculture this year.

### **2014 Agriculture Statistics for Green County**

Agriculture statistics for Green County show that last year tobacco is still the number one cash crop. With 2,590 acres planted last year and an average of 2,015lbs/acre, Green County produced over 5,215,000lbs of tobacco. Corn coming in the number two spot, with 9,700 acres planted. Averaging 110 bushel/acre, there were 1,067,000 bushels of corn harvested. Number three is soybeans. Having 7,800 acres of soybeans planted and an average of 53 bushel/acre, 413,000 bushels of soybeans were harvested. Next are forages. There were 33,500 acres harvested and averaged of 2.5 tons/acre, with a total of 83,750 tons of forages. Also there were over 18,500 head of adult beef cattle and over 1,800 head of adult dairy cattle here in Green County.

As one can see agriculture takes a leading role in Green County. Over the past three years all of these statistics have increased about 10% except for dairy cattle, which has decreased about 5%. These are the top six areas of production agriculture in Green County, but there are many other agriculture commodities such as vegetable and fruit production, goats, equine, swine, poultry, etc.



*Tobacco, #1 cash crop in Green County.*

## **4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

### **Cloverbud Program Promotes Early Childhood Development**

The Green County Cooperative Extension Service recognized that early childhood development is important for developing self-sufficient, caring and productive citizens. In Kentucky, only 49% of youth were ready for Kindergarten according to a Kids County survey. The Green County 4-H Council recognized that 4-H could contribute to early childhood development through an organized, parent involved learning experience called Cloverbuds. Cloverbuds targets youth younger than nine years of age and provides learning activities with caring adults open to all youth and families. Activities include learning about plants and animals through hands-on



*Travis Keith helps Cheyenne Keith catch a "wbopper" during a Cloverbud fishing trip.*

activities and field trips. Additional topics include health, sharing and being responsible. In the past six years, over one hundred youth have participated in the Cloverbuds program with many kids being repeat participants. Parents questioned about the benefits of Cloverbuds indicate the youth are more questioning about things in

their daily life and a greater emphasis on helping others after their participation in this 4-H sponsored group.

### **Youth Prepare Their Career Path Through Career Discovery**

Today's economy is extremely aggressive for those seeking jobs. In April 2013, Forbes reported that an average of 118 individuals apply for any given position. Competition can be fierce. Classes and Careers reports that the most common mistake made by interviewers is having little or no knowledge about the company or field noted by 47% of bosses who complete interviews. Preparing our youth for this extremely competitive arena is a goal of the Green County 4-H program. Over one week, 4-H presented an employment awareness program to 135 seventh grade students in Green County. Each youth researched a career in which they were interested and prepared a completed job application based upon their chosen field of interest. Twelve volunteers provided resources and guidance with directed career discovery.

Each youth was formally interviewed for their "job" to evaluate their understanding of the career path and skills necessary. All students felt they could have known more about their desired jobs or career path. Eighty-five percent felt more confident in their ability to find information and details about their career interest or knew of adults who could provide positive direction in their search for information. These empowered youth will be the future business leaders and employees who will drive and grow our economy in the future.



*Lauren Nunn volunteers her time assisting students at the GCMS Reality Store.*

### **Youth Identify Community Needs and Solutions**

Green County Cooperative Extension Service has helped youth to connect leadership opportunities to their lives and communities. Offering youth leadership activities increases their self confidence in their ability to make a positive change in their life and reduces the influence of negative risk factors. 4-H provides youth opportunities to develop, practice and demonstrate their leader abilities creating our community's future leaders.

4-H youth learn principles of leadership through their 4-H club meetings and interaction with teen and adult volunteers. Leadership workshops teach officers parliamentary procedure and mechanics of an organized meeting. With volunteer guidance, youth identify community service needs and solutions which youth can create positive change in their community.

In the past year, 178 Green County youth have participated in 4-H Leadership activity. The youth identified three community service projects which included a food drive for the local pantry, care package collections for a emergency situations and a school beautification project. Over seven hundred hours of leadership activities and community service events were contributed by the 4-H youth. The food collected was the largest donation to our local food pantry that month providing critical food for those in need. Using the independent sector value for volunteers, the 4-H youth volunteer impact was over \$15,500 to the local community. Though the impact on the youth's lives was far greater; their increased confidence in making positive changes in their hometown creates successful, contributing citizens in the future.

## **FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES**

### **Help, Hope and Hands Continues Community and International Program**

In the summer of 2014, our Help, Hope and Hands group took on a new challenge to literally turn trash into treasure. A group of 8 volunteers, with numerous others in other counties throughout Kentucky, collected grocery store bags to cut them up and crochet them into sleeping mats for orphans in Haiti and Kentucky Homeless. Each mat takes an average of 75+ hours and approximately 1,000 grocery bags to make. Over 125 Green County students participated in this community service project by collecting and cutting bags. As a result of this project, the Help, Hope and Hands group have donated 17 mats to the Hope Mobile in Lexington, Kentucky to be distributed to the homeless in Lexington and 25 mats were shipped to Haiti in March for our international project. In addition, 2 mats were sent to the Philippines and another 5 mats will be donated in the next few months. Volunteers have spent approximately 3,675 hours crocheting and cutting over 49,000 grocery bags. During this time, our Help, Hope and Hands group donated over 105 cancer caps to cancer patients in our area.



*A mother in Haiti accepts a sleeping mat donated from the Help, Home and Hands group.*

### **Resolution Restart**

The Kentucky, as well as the national economy entered into a period of prolonged recession in December 2007. During the period of economic recession and in the continued slow recovery, Kentucky consistently lagged behind other areas of the United States in household economic indicators, including personal income, population living below the poverty line, and unemployment rates. Many individuals, families, and households were unprepared to manage the rapidly changing economic conditions. Along with the economic recession, health has continued to be a critical issue in Kentucky. Kentucky ranks 44th out of all states in overall health. Issues of obesity, smoking and diabetes are critical. As part of the Managing in Tough Times Initiative, the Green County Cooperative Extension Service hosted the Small Steps to Health and Wealth Online Challenge.

Small Steps to Health and Wealth (SSHW) is a national extension program designed to encourage participants to make positive behavior changes to simultaneously improve their health and personal finances. The SSHW program consists of two main sections: a discussion of 20 similarities between health and personal finance issues and 10 suggested behavior change strategies that can be applied to either area of life. The impact of health on finances and finances on health is also explored. The program concludes with a discussion of seven key health and wealth success factors: attitude, automation, awareness/knowledge, control, environment, goals, and time.

The online challenge is a six-week program that allows participants to track the daily choices they make related to nutrition, physical activity, and personal finances. It has been well documented that when people monitor their behavior and measure how they're doing, they are often inspired to do better and achieve positive results. Forty-seven consumers participated in the 2015 online challenge.

As part of the challenge, total participant outcomes include:

- Consuming at least 1040 cups of fruits and vegetables
- Exercising a minimum of 7,020 minutes or 117 hours
- Tracking 1,720,000 steps with a pedometer
- Saving more than \$230 in loose change
- Applying \$850 toward debt reduction or an emergency fund
- Tracking daily expenditures was reported 2,360 times
- Preparing 341 lunches at home, saving approximately \$1,524

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College of Agriculture,  
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**The Green County  
Cooperative  
Extension Service**

*Extending Knowledge,  
Changing Lives*

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