

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Changing Lives*

IN LAUREL COUNTY

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



Priority Program Efforts

- A total of 701 people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
- 152 youth made an impact in their community through service projects
- 521 local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
- 1,315 Producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
- 9,438 youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- 16,627 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- A total of 9,967 individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- A total of 10,099 youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
- 2,047 individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.



Laurel County Cooperative Extension Service after expansion was completed

In May of 2014, the Laurel County Cooperative Extension Service broke ground and began a large expansion project to add much needed space and facilities to their existing office. The project was a result of a 4 year planning process by the County Extension Council and District Board members. The office increased its square footage by 9,204 for a space totaling 16,024 square feet.

The remodel included the addition of a demonstration kitchen which seats up to 50 people. The meeting room seating capacity was almost doubled, when the original 3 meeting rooms were expanded into 6 different rooms. Also included in the remodel were 5 new offices to make space for new and existing personnel. The building is now complete with state of the art technology throughout.

On October 1, 2015 the Laurel County Extension Office held their annual Farm Industry Tour. After visiting the KSU Aquaculture program at the London Utility Commission, the next stop was at the Extension Office for the open house and ribbon cutting ceremony held in honor of the completed building project. Nearly 250 people were present for the open house. Many toured the building and enjoyed lunch in the new meeting rooms.

Animal Reproduction Practices for Beef Producers



As beef farming operations in Laurel County continue to grow, so does the need for training opportunities to help producers increase their profits. To address this need, the Laurel County Cooperative Extension Service collaborated with the Laurel County Cattlemen's Association to provide opportunities for local producers to learn the latest advances in animal reproductive science. Utilizing reproductive research strategies developed with the University of Kentucky, on-farm demonstrations were conducted and producers learned state of the art techniques in the synchronization of the cycles of breeding animals as well as embryo transfer and artificial breeding. As a direct result of the program, all of the herds involved in the study showed an increase in the conception rate and number of live births. Over the course of three years, twenty producers have participated in the program with an excess of 1,000 head of cattle. The use of embryo transfer and artificial breeding has allowed producers to use superior genetics to improve herd health, growth rates and carcass quality. The participants have reported a decrease in the number of calving difficulties due to the use of small birth weight bulls. All have reported that the conception rate within their herds has increased from 80% to 90% through the utilization of these new practices.

"This program is about more than reproduction practices. It teaches farmers about animal nutrition, management, and health...which are all parts of a successful cattle operation."

*- Terry McPhetridge, President
Laurel County Cattlemen's Association*

4-H Discovery Pollinator Garden

Due to a request from local schools for more hands-on programming for special needs students, the Laurel County 4-H agent collaborated with the U.S. Forestry service to help plant a pollinator garden near the local extension office. Under the guidance of Beth Christensen from the US Forest Service, 20 special needs students, 11 peer mentors, and 10 adults, helped to plant a pollinator garden that will attract local bees and butterflies. The garden is now registered as a certified Monarch waystation.

For many of the students this was the first time they had ever planted anything. Students learned about different types of Kentucky native plants, how to pick a plot of land and prepare the soil and how to plant a garden. They also learned that Monarch Waystations are places that provide resources necessary for monarchs to produce successive generations and sustain their migration. The students will return next spring to care for the garden and expand upon their knowledge of what has happened since the garden's planting.



Super Star Chef Day Camp

With the growing number of families eating on the run instead of cooking at home many children don't receive needed basic cooking skills and do not consume the recommended fruits and vegetables each day. In an effort to encourage more youth to get into the kitchen and to improve their diets the Laurel County Family and Consumer Sciences program offered a 3-day Super Star Chef day camp. Nineteen low-income children ranging from 8-14 attended this 3-day, 4 hour (each day) camp. Students were taught basic cooking skills such as food and equipment safety, safe food handling, proper cutting techniques, reading a recipe and basic nutrition. In the process they used basic learning skills such as math, science and reading.

Where Does Your Money Go?

With poverty rates continuing to increase, Kentucky, with a rate of 19.4%, now has the distinction of having one of the top poverty rates in the nation. Coupled with the fact that Eastern Kentucky leads the state in unemployment, money management is a key issue in Eastern Kentucky. In response to these concerning statistics the Laurel County FCS Agent provided a financial management program for local Family Resource Centers and school counselors. The program



“Where Does Your Money Go?” was provided to not only assist participants in improving their finances but to enable them to help their local clientele as well.

Fifty participants were taught basic financial management such as developing a spending/savings plan, how to make better choices, identifying spending leaks and more. A written survey revealed that as a direct result of attending this program:

- 97% now think differently about how to manage their money
- 100% realize that they could have more money if they made different spending choices
- Participants identified over \$38,000 in spending leaks and of this money
 - o 68% stated that they would use this money to pay off bills
 - o 62% stated that they would use this money to start a savings
 - o 27% stated that they would use this money to purchase a need
- 78% of the participants stated that they would now track expenses
- 81% of the participants stated that they would reduce spending leaks
- 49% of the participants stated that they would now spend money on needs before wants
- 59% of the participants stated that they would develop a spending/savings plan
- 100% stated that they were now managing their money better since attending the program

Health In Motion Coalition

In October 2011, the Laurel County Cooperative Extension 4-H agent joined the Laurel County Community Health in Motion coalition to represent extension in a county-wide strategic planning project. The coalition consists of 35 members and 20 community agencies. It is co-facilitated by the Laurel County Health Department and Saint Joseph London. The coalition used the community health improvement planning model known as Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP), which was developed by the National Association of County and City Health Officials in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. They used this framework to assess the strengths and needs of Laurel County and then formulated a plan to address those identified needs.

The coalition analyzed the assessment data, identified priority health issues and created a plan specifying program, policy, systems and environmental change strategies to improve the health of Laurel County. Strategic issues identified that had the highest need to be addressed were:

1. Alcohol and drugs,
2. Obesity and physical activity,
3. Heart disease, stroke and diabetes,
4. Feeling safe in the neighborhood,
5. Family support system.

Over the past year the coalition members and the agencies they represent have addressed 42 issues set forth in the plan, and met goals in all four strategic issue areas with 102 programs and activities being held to accomplish the goals. Thousands of participants benefited from the programs offered and improvements have been seen throughout the report. The committee members are now in the process of writing the new survey questions for the upcoming 4-year plan of work. Program evaluations show the result of positive skill building and intermediate outcomes. To see a full CHIP (Laurel County Community Health Improvement Plan) report go to:

http://www.laurelcohealthdept.org/Accrediation_Health_Assessments.htm

on the accreditation and health assessments page.



Taking Ownership of Your Diabetes

According to the Kentucky Diabetes Report the prevalence of diabetes has more than tripled since 1995 with an estimated 507,000 Kentucky adults living with diabetes. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention warned in its National Diabetes Statistics Report of 2014 that the number of diabetics continues to increase. Not only do those affected with diabetes deal with an increased risk of serious health complications such as blindness, heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, and more, the cost to our health care system is daunting with hospital charges of over 183 million and emergency rooms charges over 23 million in 2011.

In response to the increasing need, the Laurel County Extension FCS program offered three 12-week programs entitled "Taking Ownership of Your Diabetes." Fifty participants were taught the basics of diabetes, how diabetes affects your body, and how to take control of the disease by proper eating and management.

In an initial survey given after the 12 week program 90% said the information learned from the program



was better than what they had gotten from their doctors. Most of the participants were clueless to the consequences of not taking care of themselves. 100% of the participants agreed to make changes to their eating habits and management of the disease.

In a follow-up survey taken 3-6 months after the completion of the program, participants stated that as a direct result of participating in our program

- 88% stated that they felt they had more control over their disease
- 50% eat better by planning meals, having appropriate snacks, and knowing how to judge serving sizes and carbs
- 25% improved their daily management of the disease
- 94% stated that they had improved their daily blood glucose level
- 31% improved their A1C numbers and consequently their health
- 38% lost weight

High Tunnel Production

The Natural Resource Conservation Service EQUIP program has enabled the construction of 98 high tunnels



in the South East Kentucky area since 2010. This form of production is new to most growers and they are in search of research based and experiential information. The Southern Sustainable Agricultural Working Group, NRCS, Grow Appalachia and the Laurel County Extension Service hosted a train the trainer program to better equip those working with these growers. The program focused on high tunnel construction, soil health, pest practices, organics, marketing and profitability and resources for assistance. The program was attended by 34 participants with 7 from out of state. Pre- and post-tests were given to attendees. The attendees were asked to rate the level of knowledge on a scale of 1-5 (5 being highest) in the areas of organics; soil fertility and health; marketing and profitability; and construction of high tunnels. The pre-test results ranged from 2.06 – 2.7, the post-test results ranged from 3.34 - 4.22. Thirty-two of the 34 participants stated that they found the information very useful and would be better prepared dealing with these issues.

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College of Agriculture,
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**The Laurel County
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*Extending Knowledge,
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