EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE
Changing Lives

IN MASON COUNTY

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

Representative Mike Denham and Mason County Extension Leaders commemorating Cooperatives Extension’s 100th Anniversary

Celebrating 100 years of Cooperative Extension

The Mason County Cooperative Extension Service continues its mission to bring research-based information from both land grant institutions (University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University) to local individuals and families. As we reflect on the past 100 years, it is apparent that Cooperative Extension continues to make strides in serving a diverse group of clientele. Although we continue to meet the needs of rural populations, we are also hosting numerous programs in the various areas of agriculture and natural resources, horticulture, family and consumer sciences, 4-H and 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

- 371 youth reported eating more healthy foods
- A total of 84 individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- 58 local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
- A total of 54 people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
- A total of 30 youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
- 15 youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- 14 Producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
- 12 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- 5 individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.
4-H & Youth Development

Agent: Karen Douglas

The Mason County 4-H and Youth Development program has been working with teens on rejuvenating teen council and leadership development. Teens are excelling, planning and carrying out events and activities; such as teaching a livestock sportsmanship & ethics class for the 4-H livestock club. 10 members of our teen club also provided leadership for a cloverbud day camp experience for cloverbud livestock youth ages 5-8. They were partnered with 2 cloverbuds to rotate through workshops & classes and helped teach some of the classes. Teens used personal experience, information from an in-service training and internet sources to provide the information.

Impact of 4-H

At a recent field day sponsored by Mason County Extension staff and Office and the local N.R.C.S. committee a parent of a former 4-H member came up to me and bragged on the 4-H program and what it had done for her kids but her daughter in particular. Her daughter’s main project was Consumer Education and she excelled at it doing research, speech & demonstrations, record books and was a state champion attending National 4-H Congress. Her mom said that she had worked in a consumer related field for a major hotel chain but now has gone to the private sector and is a consumer coordinator for a company in Cincinnati. She credits 4-H and all that she did as a member with her career choices and success in the workplace.

Financial Management and Reality Store

Agent and program assistant worked with the Practical Living teacher at Mason County Middle School to do financial management programs with all 8th grade students in the middle school. We did classes on setting financial goals, saving money, opening bank accounts, both checking and savings. We had the students try to set a goal for one thing they wanted this year; like a new phone or pair of tennis shoes. They then researched that item to find a cost and set a savings plan towards that goal. They learned how to open bank accounts, balance a check book, use of credit and debit cards.

We worked this information in with the 4-H reality store. They picked their career based on their GPA and interests. They researched their careers on the internet; what schooling is required; how much their schooling would cost them. Then they went through the reality store and had to live on one month’s salary. Whether they were married or single, had kids was luck of the draw. They had to visit every booth at the store; paying taxes, back college loans, finding housing, food, clothes, transportation, pay utilities and every bill that families deal with every month.

I think it was an eye opener for the students. Several said they didn’t know that kids were so expensive. Some said that they now realize how their parents feel and that they would try to help out more. Some said that they had starting a savings plan.

We hope to continue that program and come back to these students in a couple of years as high school students and do a follow up program including job interviews, dress for success and much more.

Megan Fulton & Colton Campbell helping an 8th grade student at the 4-H Reality Store.

Family and Consumer Sciences

Agent: Rachael Price

Mason County Homemakers

To empower leaders in Mason County, Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Extension is very active with the Mason County Homemakers, a division of the Kentucky Extension Homemakers Association (KEHA). Mason County has over 380 Homemaker leaders that volunteer over 21,000 hours of community service back to Mason County. Not only does Mason County Family and Consumer Sciences Extension provide trainings for these individuals to take back and teach to others within Mason County, we also act as a support for these individuals so that they can serve the community to their full potential. This past year the Mason County Homemaker President, Gladys Green, was recognized for her contributions to the community by receiving the honor of becoming a Kentucky Colonel. One Mason County Homemaker put it best, “It is always evident that homemakers care about their community. This group displays the very meaning of volunteerism and unselfishness in their everyday lives.”

“**This group displays the very meaning of volunteerism and unselfishness in their everyday lives**”

WIN: Wellness in Kentucky

In Mason County the obesity rate is 24% with the lack of physical activity being at 36%, and only 18.3% of Mason
County residents are receiving their daily recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. To address this issue in our youth Mason County Family and Consumer Sciences Extension program has been in the Mason County Middle School monthly conducting the WIN: Wellness in Kentucky program with 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. The WIN curriculum was developed as a series that meet not only academic expectations but also national health standards and focuses on improving health status of Kentucky youth and their families. Through this program students gained the knowledge on how to eat a variety of food in moderation, balance calorie intake with calories used, increase fruit and vegetable consumption, and how to be active daily. One 7th grader said, “Something I enjoyed was to know how fruits and vegetables help you, and the vitamins you get from them.” Students not only gained knowledge, but were able to try new foods and learned how to make healthier snack options. Over 90% of the children said they had done something different to be healthier since starting the program including trying a new healthier food option, reading food labels more often, drinking less sugary drinks, and changing how they snack at home.

**Agriculture**
Agent: Tad Campbell

**Kentucky Silage Corn Hybrid Performance Test**
As of June 2013, there were 772 permitted dairy farms located in Kentucky with about 10 in Mason County. Providing ample high quality forage such as corn silage to dairy operations is vital for milk production. University of Kentucky Extension Agents from four districts partnered with a University of Kentucky Extension Specialist along with local farmers to plant and harvest 26 corn silage varieties on 3 farms across Kentucky. Performance data was collected for yield, disease presence, quality, and milk yield. The results were printed as the official UK Corn Silage Hybrid Performance Test publication of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. Farmers from Kentucky and across the United States are using this information to select corn silage varieties for increased milk production. Due to the information collected local dairy producers are seeking higher yielding varieties with more total digestible nutrients.

Mason County hosted one of the variety trials with cooperation of a local silage producer. Soil data, fertility data and disease presence is calculated along with performance data to aid producers in selection of the best varieties for the farming operation. The results were listed online, in Dairy Herd Management (national magazine), and in statewide publications. Farmers from Kentucky and across the United States are using this information to select corn varieties for increased production and reduced supplementation costs.

**Farm Family Fun Night**
Realizing the limitation of educational based events geared for entire family involvement, the Extension Services in Kentucky and Ohio along with Maysville Community and Technical College partnered to develop and implement Farm Family Night, a program offering over 30 educational sessions to all segments of the family. Over 1,000 members of agriculture families attended educational sessions during the evening due to sponsorship by Farm Credit Services, Hinton Mills, Rip’s Farm Center, Meadowview Regional Hospital, and Winchester Ag Services. In addition to the educational activities, many businesses and organizations collaborated to host a trade show as part of the evening events. Participants gained knowledge about bees, viticulture, cattle management, equine, forages, gardening, composting, food preparation and safety, youth livestock judging, and health. Producers also had the opportunity to gain certification in the Beef Quality Assurance program. Sessions were taught by local volunteers, Extension Agents, Extension Specialist, MCTC faculty, and local business owners. The event was successful based on feedback from local families. One local vendor said, “This night exceeded all expectations with participation, I ran out of handouts before the first break of classes. The educational opportunities for farmers is wonderful and providing it in a one stop for entire family is a great experience.” The event was developed to offer the entire family a chance to enjoy activities together in one setting. Continuing to offer programs that strengthen the family bond is critical for rural families in agriculture.

**KY Farm Start**
With increasing input costs, fewer new farmers, and continuing changes for farm operations the Buffalo Trace Area Agriculture Agents offered the KYFarmStart program to local producers. The emphasis was to focus on producers with ten years or less experience or producers entering new enterprises. Mason County being centrally located was the host site for the program. Agents in Mason, Bracken, Lewis, and Fleming Counties collaborated with University of Kentucky specialists to offer over 10 classes to local producers. The goal of the KyFarmStart program is to assist clientele in evaluating their land, labor, and other resources in an effort to make management decisions that are profitable for their operation. Producers were introduced to farm liabilities, business plan design, production practices, estate planning, and several other educational programs to help allow better management decisions. As a result of the program one individual is utilizing budget enterprise worksheets to evaluate the feasibility for adding enterprises to the operation as well as using the tools to more closely manage existing enterprises. 12 participants from the surrounding counties took part in the program, which was conducted in conjunction with another group of counties via web-based technology. The use of the technology allowed producers to interact with speakers and other participants and was more efficient for the offering.
**Horticulture**  
Agent: Tracey Parriman

**Mason County Farmers Market**  
This year the Mason County Farmers Market added an additional location to their regular selling point located at the Mason County Extension Office. The 2nd location for the market served as the parking lot located under the old bridge on 2nd Street. This location served to reach clientele living, working, and shopping in Downtown Maysville. The market was held every Thursday at this downtown location. Vendors reported increased sales with this added location in addition to increased accessibility of fresh locally grown produce to those who have WIC (Women, Infants and Children) and Senior Vouchers available to spend at the market. WIC voucher redemption increased from 36% in 2013, to 55% in 2014. This increase is attributed to better accessibility to clientele at the downtown location. Moreover, the market had several new vendors join the market in 2014. In addition to locally grown produce, the market now offers jams, jellies, maple syrup, bakery items, and other home crafted items such as painted gourds and birdhouses.

**Master Gardener Program**  
The Mason County Master Gardener Program has continued to grow and now has 32 active volunteers who completed over 1,000 volunteer service hours in 2013. This year the Master Gardeners hosted their 3rd Annual Backyard Garden Day on May 10th, 2014. Master Gardeners held workshops for making bamboo trellises, beneficial insect homes, and mini-terrariums. They had square foot gardening displays, leaf printing and many other gardening displays and hands-on activities. They also had vegetables, flowers, and native plants for sale such as milkweed. Over the summer Master Gardeners completed a Monarch Waystation located at the Limestone Landing floodwall. This garden bed attracts Monarch butterflies to lay their eggs, as milkweed is the primary food source for caterpillars. Over the summer several Monarch caterpillars were spotted at the Waystation. In addition to maintaining several of their projects from years past, Master Gardeners assisted with numerous Extension programming including Growing to Cook Kid’s Camp at the Extension Office, Halloween Kidfest, and the Extension Service’s Centennial Celebration. This December the Master Gardeners will be holding their annual Live Greenery Workshops once again where participants can come and make a fresh wreath with using live greens.

Master Gardening this year was also taken abroad as Horticulture Agent, Tracey Parriman and Mason County Master Gardener Association President, Phyllis Guthrie were chosen to be speakers for the International Master Gardener Symposium in South Korea. Back in 2011, collaboration between the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and the South Korean Geoyongi-do Research and Development Station was formed when a memorandum of agreement was signed to collaborate and share ideas. From this agreement, the Korean Master Gardener Program was started. Delegates from the U.S., Japan, and Germany traveled across the world to learn about the South Korean Master Gardeners and to share what their Master Gardeners are doing at home. Mason County was fortunate to be represented in sharing their success with the Master Gardener Program.

The next enrollment for Master Gardener classes will be in fall of 2015.