

# EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

## *Changing Lives*

### IN MERCER COUNTY

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



#### ***Mercer County Exhibit Hall, Home of the Mercer County Farmers' Market.***

After several years of planning, design, and

development the Mercer County Farmers' Market now has a permanent home, located at the Mercer County Fairgrounds. This project required input and assistance from a lot of people throughout the community during the entire design and implementation. Total donations and grants for the project added up to \$434,141. Total cost of the project ended at approximately \$560,000.

This facility will provide a permanent home for the Mercer County Farmers Market and serve as a multi-purpose facility for the community. It has a commercial kitchen for farmers to make value added agriculture products in compliance with HB391. In addition, it has restrooms and showers, allowing the facility to serve as a trailhead for tourists and visitors utilizing the many miles of water, hiking, biking and riding trails in the county. This will also become the largest meeting facility in the county and will

incorporate a sales ring so the 4-H/FFA Youth Investment Sale will also gain a permanent location. This project has the potential to impact both the agriculture community and the entire county for generations to come.

Project construction is complete and this was the first season for the Mercer County Farmers'

## ***Priority Program Efforts***

92 Individuals are involved in addressing significant community issues

425 individuals reported changes in knowledge, opinions, skills or aspirations related to the impact of public policies producers on agriculture and the environment

268 youth improved skills in communication, problem solving or group process in addressing community issues and needs as a result of Extension programming

731 People reported gained knowledge about eating healthy foods.

425 Individuals who reported practice changes related to safety (use of bicycle helmets, fire extinguishers, tractor roll boars, proper ATV operation, etc.)

1,558 Youth and adults who demonstrate informed and effective decision-making

75 Individuals who made a lifestyle change for the purpose of improving water and/or natural resources (due to recommendations from Extension)

72 adults indicating increased leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs

#### **Mercer County Fair Floral Hall**



Market to be in their permanent home. The facility has already increased interest from producers in making value added products and producers have started renting out the certified kitchen.



## Horticulture



What a fun, and exciting first year it has been for the Mercer County Horticulture Program! A new class of Master Gardeners have just completed the 13 week program, data was collected



from the UK bedding plant variety trials,

Mercer County was the location for a UK garden mum demonstration plot and field day.



**Mercer County Beekeeping Club** has continued to grow. Experienced and new beekeepers alike gather together to share their love and knowledge of beekeeping. The club meets monthly and covers a variety of beekeeping topics and has hands on demonstrations. The

Bee Club meets on the last Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Mercer County Extension Office.



## Agriculture & Natural Resources

### **Focus on Agriculture Safety**

Various agricultural organizations including the Mercer County Agriculture Advisory Council and Mercer County Farm Bureau Federation indicated the importance of agriculture/farm safety education and need for a focus in this area. In response the ANR agent collaborated with the 4-H agent, 4-H program assistant, Mercer County Schools, Burgin Independent Schools and Mercer County Farm Bureau Federation to improve a currently existing Farm Safety Day that had been held each September for 6th graders. Agents collaborated to refine topics for the day and contact speakers to cover various aspects of farm and agriculture safety. MCFBF and Mercer County FFA provided meals for all students, teachers and speakers. In addition, the ANR agent worked with the Agriculture Field Day planning committee to incorporate a farm safety speaker at the field day and have door prizes that related to farm safety ranging from first aid kits to SMV signs to reflective lights. Door prizes given out at other recent agriculture events have also centered around giving farmers tools to make it easier for them to focus on agriculture safety. Farmers and youth now have more knowledge about how to be safer on the farm and some resources to make their farms safer.



### **Managing Beef Cattle in Confinement**

Due to increased demand for agricultural land and questions from farmers several agents in central KY identified the need to provide information to cattle farmers, specifically stocker operations, on managing cattle in confinement facilities. Agents collaborated with UK Extension Specialists, Kentucky Cattlemen's Association and Kentucky Beef Network to host a conference to address this need, "Managing Beef Cattle in Confinement", which was held in Fayette County on November 20. The Mercer ANR Agent specifically worked on developing the flyer and advertisement for the program as well as promotion to other agents. More than 100 conference attendees came from over 20 counties throughout the state and featured speakers from across the country included Extension Specialists, farmers, and representatives from lawmaking agencies. Attendees heard from national experts on this topic and received information ranging from cattle health to facility design and environmental compliance.

## 4-H Youth Development



### **4-H Babysitting Certification Workshop**

To help prepare for the major responsibilities of being a care giver of younger children, 19 youth attended 4-H Babysitting Workshop. The program was a collaborative effort with FRYSC to implement the 4-H Babysitting curriculum.

### **Truth & Consequences: The Choice is Yours**

is an enrichment activity designed to show students the impact of getting involved with illicit and legal substances. With this increasing substance abuse problem the Mercer County 4-H collaborated with the Board of Education and 21 other agencies and organizations to offer Truth & Consequences to 9th grade high school students. There were 281 students and 43 local volunteers that participated in the program. Each student was randomly given a situation that was related to drug or alcohol use that required them to be accompanied by their own parent or a parent volunteer to face the consequences of their actions.



### **4-H Community Service**

~106 Community Service Scholarships totaling \$4,240., over 1,267 hours of service by 62 youth  
~Drop Your Jeans Recycling Campaign—2014  
—over 1,060 pairs of jeans collected = two homes

being insulated (1,000 pairs).  
~Project Keep'em Warm Project provides knotted blankets to every child on Love Tree. Over \$5,000 in donations was collected to make 300 blankets.  
~Aluminum Tab Collection over the past 11 years we have collected over 12,897 pounds and given over \$7,227. to Indian Summer Camp



### **Mercer County 4-H Data 2014-2015**

Total 4-H membership of 2,418 youth  
156 Adult 4-H Volunteers  
69 Youth 4-H Volunteers  
48 School 4-H Clubs & 24 Specialty 4-H Clubs



## Family Consumer Sciences

### **Preserving African-American History**

As a facet of the 2014 Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration (MLK Day) held annually by the Mercer County Cooperative Extension Service and working with the local Harrodsburg/Mercer County Oral History Committee, there was an attempt to collect oral histories of those Harrodsburg residents who participated in the Freedom March of 1964 in Frankfort, Kentucky with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mercer County Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences arranged for those oral history interviews to be video recorded. A highlight video of those interviews was produced and shown at the 2015 MLK Day; the eleven minute video was so well received that a script was then written and recorded that explained why Dr. King was in Frankfort and the significance of the Civil Rights movement in Kentucky. This further development of the video has led to an exclusive documentary committee and an expanded production including more interviews and local voiceover talent. More recently the documentary committee has scheduled a taping of local musicians from regional African-American Churches singing Civil Rights-related music to be inserted into the documentary for more authentic and significant background music. The continued commitment to this documentary has produced an additional audio CD and another separate DVD for the program of music and praise. Members and other volunteers of this documentary committee have exhibited leadership skills taking active leadership roles in this collective effort to address community challenges surrounding diversity and unification. These leaders have addressed local issues and initiated solutions to these community problems through this ever-growing documentary project.



### **Canning 101**

A series of workshops were held jointly with Woodford County Extension with over 30 participants. Participants received research based information designed to increase knowledge and skills of safe food preservation techniques. The topics included pressure canning, boiling water bath canning, high acid foods, low acid foods, headspace and more.

Plans for 2016 workshop have been scheduled: May 18 @ 10am in Woodford; May 26 @5:30 in Mercer; June 17 @ 10am in Mercer; June 28 @ 5pm in Woodford; July 18 @1pm in Mercer; July 30 @ 9am in Woodford  
Hands-on Canning Camp: July19-21, 12-4pm in Mercer; August 2-4, 12-4pm in Woodford.

# Nutrition Education Program (NEP)



## Nutrition Education Program (NEP) Staff Addition:

Mercer County has seen increases in the areas of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) enrollment (28.00%), total poverty (32.90%) and child poverty (16.30%) which

demonstrate an obvious need for nutritional programming and resource management skills for low income families. Mercer County Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences gained support through communication with Mercer County Extension Service Staff, Mercer County Extension Council and Mercer County Extension District Board for initiating the hiring process for the first ever Nutrition Education Program (NEP) Assistant in Mercer County.

The goal of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) is to improve the likelihood that persons eligible for the Food Benefit Program (formerly Food Stamp Program) will make healthy choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the MyPlate.gov.

**2015 Friend of Mercer County Extension Award presented to Jack Hood, for his outstanding service to Mercer County Extension by serving as Extension District Treasurer for over 40 years.**



**GET CONNECTED**

Do you have the desire to join and get connected with others in our community? There are many ways to do this. Perhaps, you would like to join one the Family & Consumer Sciences Groups, Horticulture Groups, Ag Commodity Groups, or become a 4-H member or 4-H volunteer. In addition, we are in need of volunteers to assist with Kentucky Fort Harrod Beef Festival or Mercer County Fair and other related Cooperative Extension events. Please contact us for more information. We look forward to hearing from you.

### Stay Informed

If you would like more information about our current programs and current events, you have several options. If you would like to be added to any of our newsletter lists, just call or drop by our office.

- ◆ Listen on Radio—Extension Report on 1420 WHBN—8:10 a.m. & Ag News on 1230 WHIR - 7:34 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.
- ◆ Read our articles in The Harrodsburg Herald

**Webpage** - <http://ces.ca.uky.edu/mercer>

Visit our Facebook Pages:

Mercer County Farmers Market

Mercer County 4-H (KY)

Mercer County Cooperative Extension Service



### Mercer County Extension Council:

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Tim Ellis, Vice Chair Brenda Semones  
Gina Moffitt, Secretary Kathryn Tuggle  
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### Mercer County Cooperative Extension Service Staff:

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**The Mercer County  
Cooperative Extension  
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**Extending Knowledge  
Changing Lives**

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