

COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION
SERVICE



College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment

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EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Changing Lives*



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When you
support
Extension,
farmers
diversify crops
and expand
markets to
increase access
to fresh local
produce
in rural
communities.



Extension has worked with growers to diversify selection and improve the quality of fruits and vegetable for the Metcalfe County Farmer's Market.

Metcalfe County Farmer's Market Benefits from Extension Leadership, Educational Programs, and Marketing Initiatives.

Metcalfe County Farmer's Market received funding from USDA Farmer's Market Promotion Program, with leadership from Extension. The expansion of the market has increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables, especially for limited resource families.



Expanding farmers markets increases access to fruits and vegetables. Ninety-four percent (94%) of Metcalfe County residents who participated in the Nutrition Education Programs improved dietary quality and increased average vegetables consumption.

(NEERS, 2014)

Extension has been providing research based educational information to farmers about crop diversification and creating new markets for fruits and vegetables. Like many farmers markets in small communities, the Metcalfe County Farmers Market had their challenges. Extension sought community partners, grants and other resources to implement innovative ways to make their market sustainable. As a result, farmers are now producing a variety of crops, increased yields, and extended the growing season by constructing high tunnels and green houses.

During 2014, the Metcalfe Farmer's Market was open weekly with 19 local producers selling a variety of fruits and vegetables and reporting increased sales as high as \$492 in one day. With smart phone technology, farmers were able to accept credit and debit cards as well as Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program (SNAP – formerly food stamps) and WIC electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards. Over 1,500 residents shopped at the farmer's market.

A Double Dollar program was initiated for low income residents. Families who shopped with WIC or Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program vouchers or their EBT card received double the value when purchasing fresh, local produce. Extension Nutrition Education Programs conducted demonstrations and classes for SNAP participants at the farmer's market and other locations in the community throughout the year. Those residents, who participated in the Nutrition Education Program, improved dietary quality (94%) and increased their average vegetable consumption (NEERS, 2014).

The Family and Consumer Sciences Extension agent provided leadership in acquiring a USDA Farmers Market Promotional Program grant, one of five awarded in Kentucky. Funds from the grant will be used to hire a market manager and



The Metcalfe Farmers Market looks forward to a new, more visible site in 2015.



Extension assisted in grant application to secure one of five USDA Farmers Market Promotional Program grants in Kentucky. Funds have been used for improved marketing, including a new logo.

lease a larger, more visible and accessible location in Edmonton for the 2015 and 2016 seasons, as well as traveling markets at major employers and community events to expand customer base. Extension worked closely with community partners to strengthen agriculture, increase accessibility to fresh local food, and improve the health of Kentucky residents.