

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Changing Lives*

IN MONROE COUNTY

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



From left to right: Emily Keith, County Extension Agent Family & Consumer Sciences; Susan Turner, County Extension Agent 4-H Youth Development; Ken Johnson, County Extension Agent Agriculture & Natural Resources; Kim Hollinsworth, Administrative Assistant and Charolette Arnett, Program Assistant.

In Monroe County we're growing ideas that make a difference in your life, your family, and your community. We have a dedicated staff of trained professionals delivering educational programs in agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, and community and economic development. The Monroe County Cooperative Extension Office is your connection to the University of Kentucky and the world. You'll see some key numbers in this report. But the numbers don't show you the people or the impact of our work. So the rest of this report



"We reap what we sow and Extension sows the seeds of success for tomorrow by providing valuable resources and unbiased information for today's agricultural producers, our farm families, and the citizens of Monroe County. Our county agents work to provide services that increases family efficiency, saves money, and teaches us to live healthier. Our youth benefit from valuable experiences in leadership and community development. It is my opinion that the value Extension brings to rural communities is immeasurable."

Thomas Dodson, County Extension Council President

Priority Program Efforts

- A total of 175 people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
- 40 local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
- 150 youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- 800 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- A total of 375 individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- A total of 450 youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills

4-H Youth Development

"Monroe County 4-H Youth Development programs offer invaluable services to the young people of our community. From nutrition lessons, teaching children about healthy eating, to leadership and communication events which encourage 4-Hers to find their voices and inner leader. Because of their 4-H involvement, youth are better prepared for a future as productive citizens and active members of their community." Kelli Long, 4-H Council President and Monroe County 4-H Alumna

Service Learning

Learning by doing. It's more than just a motto, it's what we strive to do through 4-H every day! Service learning projects help teach our youth the value of giving back and provide an avenue to further develop effective communication skills. 4-H members are involved in our community and understand that together, everyone can make a difference. Service learning projects include Red Cross Blood Drives, the Toys for Tots program, Veteran's Day meal and program, community clean up drives, and an egg hunt for special needs



Volunteers Are The Heart of Our Program

Our 97 4-H volunteers give of their time and knowledge to ensure our members are learning new skills. Programs in geology, fire safety, public speaking, record keeping, entrepreneurship, and forestry provide an opportunity for 4-H'ers to explore topics which interest them and to further develop skills



Learning Healthy Habits Early

Monthly, 4-H provides nutrition education programs to each Head Start center, Wee Care Day Care, pre-school, and Fountain Run Christian Academy. Building good nutritional habits at an early age is key to eating healthy for a lifetime. In addition, we also work with the 21st Century Learning Centers to provide nutrition programs in each elementary school.



Building Strong Families

Monroe County Family and Consumer Sciences Extension is committed to improving the quality of life for individuals and families. As the current economic situation continues to create challenges, educational programs locally have focused on Accessing Nutrition Foods, Empowering Community Leaders, and Community Economic Development. In 2014-2015, Family and Consumer Science Extension made 8,000 contacts with Monroe County individuals and families.

Accessing Nutrition Foods

The Monroe County Cooperative Extension Service collaborates with several agencies and groups to provide the best educational information to our communities in Monroe County. The first Super Star Chef program was implemented this year by collaborating with students from the dietetic program at the University of Kentucky and the Monroe County Extension Office. This program provided a fun and educational environment for youth to gain knowledge and learn skills in the kitchen. 30 children prepared recipes such as fruit kabobs, oatmeal bars, and salsa by practicing knife safety, cooking techniques, and dry/liquid measurements to make nutritious recipes that they could incorporate at home.



Empowering Community Leaders

Monroe County Extension Homemakers are proud to have 9 traditional clubs with 110 members and 2 special interest clubs. Homemakers contribute many hours of labor and financial assistance to our community. They reported serving 15,000 volunteer hours. According to the Independent Sector, a volunteer hour in the U.S. is worth \$23.07. This equates to \$268,650.15 of value added back to our county, state, and nation. They remain to be a vital organization in Extension programming within our county. This year the Extension Homemakers collaborated with 4-H and Monroe County Schools to host an Egg-ceptional Egg Hunt at the Tompkinsville City Park as well as sprucing up downtown by cleaning out weeds and planting flowers around the square. Some of their other community projects include assisting with Veteran's Day activities at the local schools, angel tree, monthly nursing home visits, collecting school supplies for Youth Services Center and providing a community breakfast to celebrate the



Community Economic Development

Community and Economic Development is a collaborative effort of all County Extension Agents in Monroe County in order to strengthen our community and enhance our local assets so that we can have a healthy thriving place for every family to live for years to come. We are committed to helping our community succeed! And we are involved in many committees and boards throughout the county, state and nation in order to accomplish bringing the community together, such as supporting the county's first crafting collaborative, the "Monroe Crafters." The group was formed to get local artisans and crafters to come together to expose their crafts by selling at local venues across the county.



Agriculture and Natural Resources



2015 was the most successful Farmers Market to date. The number of vendors was nearly double the previous years. Usually there were eight to ten producers every week. With more vendors participating, the amount of produce was up again this year. The market also had homemade foods and crafts. This year the formation of a new crafter group. They sell at the Farmers Market once a month. This has become a win-win for both the crafters and farmers. The crafters have about 25 members that produce knives, quilts, furniture, and much more. Fruit and vegetable production is a growing enterprise in Monroe County. It is easy to add a few fruit trees or an enlarged garden to produce products for sale on street corners or at the Monroe County Farmers Market. The Extension Service provides training and oversight to the farmer's market and production guidance for citizens that are participating or considering participating in vegetable production.

During 2015 working with Monroe County farmers and the Monroe County Conservation District, over 250 farm improvement practices were installed. This is a program that continues to be used by Monroe County Farmers. These included fencing, seeding pastures, hay barns, feeding pads, handling facilities, and other practices that will increase the profitability of farms in Monroe County. As you drive through the county, you can see the results for these programs. With over 50 per cent of the total income in Monroe County coming from agriculture, farm improvements will support the county



With livestock being one of the top income producers for Monroe County farmers, a great deal of emphasis is placed on training and events for livestock producers. Monroe County is a leading county for beef production. With livestock production comes the need of high quality forages. We have spent many hours on growing and harvesting grasses and legumes. The Cattlemen meet nine times a year, sponsor a field day, and



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**The Monroe County
Cooperative
Extension Service**

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