

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Changing Lives*

IN MORGAN COUNTY

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



Ribbon cutting ceremony held on May 14, 2015 at the Morgan County Extension Service.

Morgan County Extension Leaders Make Educational Center Vision a Community Reality

In the spring of 2011, the Morgan County Extension District acquired a 15 acre commercial site for a new Extension office and adjoining 150 acre farm for an educational center. The Spring, 2012 tornadoes, which destroyed the Extension office, expedited plans for a new facility. In spite of many obstacles and delays, Extension District Board and Building Committee members persevered with leadership and integrity to plan, finance, and monitor construction of a new 9,000 sq. feet Extension Educational Center. The Center provides offices, community meeting rooms and commercial kitchen for public use. Not only does the facility represent an important milestone in the tornado recovery efforts for Morgan County, it enables greater opportunities for new and continued Extension programming.

Morgan County Tornado Recovery Continues with Tree Restoration Efforts

The 90 mile track of tornadoes in March, 2012 that destroyed much of West Liberty also devastated many rural areas and untold acres of woodlands. In an effort to help home and woodland owners restore this important asset, the Morgan County Extension Service partnered with the Ky Department of Forestry and the National Arbor Day Foundation to offer a youth tree planting program and distribution program for adults. Utilizing local officials, farm stores, elementary school 4-H program and 4-H teen club members – Extension efforts resulted in the dispersal of 5,000 native tree saplings for Morgan County residents and the planting/beautification of a new elementary school displaced by the tornado. Residents and officials alike expressed their appreciation for Extension's role in this endeavor.

Priority Program Efforts

A total of 134 people are now involved in addressing significant community issues

65 youth made an impact in their community through service projects

65 local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture

45 Producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations

450 youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs

530 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming

A total of 189 individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health

A total of 603 youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills

20 individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.

Morgan County Youth Participating in the Teen Leadership Academy.

In years past Morgan County has had a very active 4-H Teen club at the county and state level, but in order to address the need for more youth leadership at the district level, a collaborative effort by Magoffin, Rowan and Morgan counties was formed to conduct the first Teen Leadership Academy in our area. The nine month program focused on developing stronger leadership and communication skills so participants will be better prepared not only for future 4-H opportunities but also career and community. Through an application process a total of eighteen youth were selected for the 2014-2015 class. Each county had six delegates to attend the academy. The Academy sessions met one whole day each month with a different focus which covered topics such as college and career preparation, communication, government and



Above: Teens learning about aquaculture on the Kentucky State University campus.



Teens working and learning how a recycling center works.

public service, robotics, community service and volunteerism. The initial meeting was a focus on team-building and communication skills. The program as a whole had over 1200 contact hours with these participants. At the conclusion of the program each participant noted they had a higher understanding of citizenship, volunteerism, leadership, and team building. Also 100% of them stated that TLA had given them the opportunity to start focusing on the future as far as college choices and career opportunities. A parent of one of the TLA participants stated, "My son has enjoyed this program so much, it has allowed him to experience real life situations in our communities that he wouldn't have had in a classroom. He looks forward to TLA every month. He absolutely has grown over this past year due to his experiences."



Group photo of all 3 counties.

Nutrition Education Programs

Morgan County Expanded Foods and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) had 58 families complete the program in 2014 – 2015. One hundred percent of families had

positive changes at exit. Sixty-one percent demonstrated improvement in resource management. Program assistant reach children, youth and families with basic nutrition education, skills in food preparation, gardening and budgeting.

Goals for 2015 – 2016 are to promote healthy beverage choices, saving money by making laundry and other cleaning agents and couponing.

Financial Wellness

The Kentucky, as well as the national, economy entered into a period of prolonged recession in December 2007. During the period of economic recession and in the continued slow recovery, KY consistently lagged behind other areas of the USA in household economic indicators, including personal income, population living below the poverty line and unemployment rates. Many individual, families and households were unprepared to manage the rapidly changing economic conditions. Many household financial strategies employed prior to the recession most likely made them more vulnerable during the period of economic crisis.

To assist individuals in understanding and responding to the current economic conditions or their "new" financial realities, the District I FCS agents and Morgan County Extension Service hosted Rebounding Your Finances after Recession financial workshops for the District I FCS and Morgan County Extension Homemakers. Emphasis was placed on understanding how current money management practices affect financial stability, increasing financial control by learning common obstacles and coping strategies for specific financial situations. 182 consumers participated in the workshops. Participant surveys indicated 96% identified money management or cost-saving strategies for their families, 92% increased their confidence in handling money issues or specific financial matters. 151 reported at least one specific saving or wealth-related goal for their family and 145 plan to take action steps toward implementing at least one financial management strategy presented during the course. One participant stated: "I have learned the need to develop a budget and make a saving plan".

Regional Fall Grazing School Impacts Farmers

The agricultural economy of Eastern Kentucky relies heavily on livestock and forage production. With limited suitable acreage, it is crucial that producers achieve maximum pasture utilization and quality. ANR agents in Morgan and surrounding counties teamed with UK Extension specialists and the Master Grazer Program to offer a Fall one day grazing school for 42 attendees from 7 Kentucky counties and 2 other states. Located at the Morgan County Extension Farm, the field day covered such topics as Winter Annuals, Summer Annuals, Drill Calibration, Sprayer Calibration, Weed Control, and



Fall Grazing School participants.

and Variety Selection. Farmers commended the program for its hands on approach, visual demonstrations, field work and practical information. According to written surveys, all farmers responding gained knowledge concerning the benefits of managed grazing systems, the use of nontraditional forages, the correct operating techniques of a no til seeder, and the management strategies needed to increase productivity of pastures

Teen Summit—Serving as the Stepping Stone for Teen Leadership!

One of the most challenging jobs of a 4-H agent's job is to retain 4-H members as they enter middle and high school. This is the time when they have exposure to more clubs and organizations along with extra-curricular activities. Morgan County, as with many other counties across the state, has school clubs and teen councils to promote and recruit participation in 4-H opportunities and leadership conferences. Teen Summit has also become a great recruitment tool and feeder program into our middle and high school leadership programs. By attending Teen Summit youth have an opportunity to develop leadership and communication skills, meet people with the same interest as them from across the state, and learn



Some returning youth from the 2014

opportunities that are available to them through Kentucky 4-H. Morgan County's attendance to this conference has grown from 2013 of having 7 delegates and two State Teen Council members to the 2014 attendance to 23 delegates for Teen Summit and one State Teen Council member. However, the 2015 delegations is one of the largest overall delegations in comparison to potential population. This year we had 35 Morgan County youth to participate in Teen Summit. The best thing about Teen Summit this year was that about 90% of the delegation only had to pay \$40-\$50 to attend. Parents and School administrators assisted



Morgan County's 2015 Teen Conference participants.

in fundraising to ensure those who wanted to attend would have the means to do so. Making this year's delegation the largest delegation Morgan County has ever had for the Teen Summit Conference. Also of the nine 8th graders that attended, four of them went onto attend Teen Conference this summer. Plus one of our Teen Summit Delegates from last year has been inspired to apply for State Teen Council this up-coming year. The real beauty in programs such as Teen Summit and Conference is that these kids are actually learning things that will help lead them through life, they think it's all fun and games but actuality

it's these experiences that they help mold them into self-sufficient adults in our community.



Pictured: Half of the first time 6th graders to attend Summit.

Morgan County Community Diabetes Coalition

Collaboration between the Morgan Co. Cooperative Extension Service FCS Program, Morgan Co. Youth Service Center, Morgan Co. Diabetes Coalition, Morgan Co. Farmer's Market and local volunteers created "Kids Veggie Bucks" program. Diabetes rates are roughly 7% in the USA with Morgan Co. exceeding 11%. The prevalence of those overweight in the county is 72% and the obesity rate 26%. The fact that only 19% of adults consume 5 or more fruits and vegetables per day is a likely contributor to these statistics.

Five dollars of play money, known as "Veggie Bucks", was distributed to youth ages 4-17 joining the "Plate it Up - KY Proud" program to purchase fresh, local fruit and vegetables at the Morgan County Farmers Market.

Six educational sessions were presented. The recipes featured local foods with samples. Both youth and adults were introduced to fresh produce and a variety of recipes. A total of 442 participant 11th 167 adults and 275 youth participated in the six sessions offered. There was a high level of positive feedback on the sampling of the fresh produce. One mother stated, "I've never cooked squash before." Survey results indicated an average of 78% increase in fruit and vegetable consumption as a result of the six sessions.

Participants increased knowledge of money and purchasing concepts. Children were introduced to money management skills and best selection of produce. Many children who are not often able to have the liberty to spend their own money were given an excellent opportunity. One Youth Service Center parent shared, "This program has helped parents feed their family."

The local farmers reaped benefits as well. Farmer's Market vendors took great pride in "showing off" their produce to the youth. They indicated this was one of their best seasons ever and the program increased the number of people visiting the market. Local farmers gained \$2500. in additional sales as a result of this program.

Rural Eating and Cooking Healthy (REACH)

The high incidence rates of chronic disease in the county was an indicator for healthy cooking intervention to assist Morgan County residents in learning techniques for healthier food preparation. The 12 session program goals included participants will: prepare healthy main course, vegetable, dessert and snack recipes, demonstrate safe methods of food preparation, demonstrate ability to read nutrition labels and list health benefits of foods associated with reduced risk of chronic disease.

Thirty-four families enrolled in the 12 session series of Rural Eating and Cooking Healthy (REACH). The program sponsored by UK College of Nursing and Morgan County FCS agent. Skills in safe food handling, proper use of tools utilized in food preparation, sampling recipes and hands on preparation have resulted in participants preparing healthier meals, trying different foods and preparation techniques.

Not only is Morgan County considered one the most economically “distressed” counties in Appalachia, there are also major health issues including high rates of diabetes, obesity and heart disease. Parts of Morgan County are designated by the USDA as “food deserts” meaning residents do not have access to healthy foods including affordable, fresh produce. Gardening is a proven activity to encourage local food production, healthier eating and increased physical activity. Two grants totaling \$55,000 have been funded by the Foundation for Healthy Kentucky (\$25,000) and Grow Appalachia Program (\$30,000) to encourage gardening as community health and economic development. As a result, the “Morgan County Go Garden Coalition” has been established to implement these grants.

To date, 25 families have been enrolled in the Grow Appalachia program. These families have completed three gardening educational sessions, planted home gardens and attended healthy cooking and food preservation classes. Additionally, the committee, in partnership with the CEDIK/Landscape Architecture program, has completed the conceptual design phase for a demonstration garden located at the Morgan County Extension Educational Center.

Morgan County GoGarden Initiative

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Leadership

Morgan County Extension Leaders are a vital link in the success of extension programming. The Morgan County Extension District Board serves as the governing body of fiscal affairs of the county extension budget. The Morgan County Extension Council comprised of extension leaders throughout the county, provides direction in programming, implementation of programs and evaluation of the Morgan County Extension Service.

Additional leadership is provided to program areas through the Morgan County Extension Homemaker Council and Family and Consumer Sciences Council. Thirty-five local volunteers provide input and volunteer time to assist. Leaders also develop leadership skills that encompass a larger focus including area or district realms. One volunteer served as Treasurer of the Licking River Area Extension Homemakers another served as District I delegate to State Extension Council representing Morgan County along with ten other counties.

Teamwork of volunteer leaders, county extension agents, program assistants and staff creates opportunities to develop and attain a major programming goals.

COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION
SERVICE



**The Morgan County
Cooperative
Extension Service**

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Changing Lives*

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