Making Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Overweight adults and youth are at risk for chronic health problems, such as, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, or some forms of cancer. Students will often skip breakfast, which decreases their energy level and school work capabilities. The Ohio County Cooperative Extension Service offers programs to improve awareness of ways of eating healthier. These include:

- **Migrant school youth** – four 2 hour sessions focused on growing your own healthy food, making healthy snacks, and exercising to improve your health. The programs included discussions and hands-on programs to immerse the students in the topics. Twelve Hispanic students attended.
- **The Importance of Breakfast** - provided a Breakfast nutrition program to over 900 youth at 6 elementary schools. The youth prepared whole wheat pancakes that were served with low-calorie syrup. The students learned how to read a nutrition label and make healthy food selections based on the nutrition label. Assuring optimal development and growth, positive effects on alertness, attention, performance on standardized achievement tests, and other skills important for academic success are enhanced for those who eat breakfast on a daily basis.
- **The Working Professional** – on Administrative Professional Day, 13 local business professionals participated in a healthy lunch and program on “Eating Healthy to Enrich Your Career”.

Priority Program Efforts

- **45** local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
- **242** youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- **2136** citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- **105** producers reported an economic impact (ie., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations.
- A total of **77** individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- A total of **1500** youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
- **567** individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.
- **353** people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
• Kindergarten and 1st Grade students - Homemakers provided a program on the importance of eating a “Rainbow” of fruits and vegetables with 560 Kindergarten and first grade students.

• Celebrate the Child - the county-wide, “Celebrate the Child” program focuses on providing children with developmental assets. Extension demonstrated preparing healthy snacks and over 900 “Plate It Up” recipes were distributed to families.

“Students realized that by raising vegetables in their garden, nutritious meals can be prepared from the fresh produce”

- Rob, Migrant Advocate

Science, Engineering and Technology: Physics Zoo

The goal of the Kentucky 4-H SET (Science, Engineering & Technology) Initiative is to improve youth’s understanding of science and help address the critical need for more scientists and engineers in the workforce. Ohio County School Students are academically tested in Science and Technology. 888 students in 4th, 7th and 8th grades completed the 4-H Physics Zoo program. The Physics Zoo is a collection of hands-on activities that the students interact in an informal setting. Activities include electrical circuits, optics, magnetism, and simple machines. The self-guided nature of the Physics Zoo ensures that everyone learns something. The program helps youth improve their knowledge and skills around science, engineering, and technology; connect learning with real-world situations where youth can adopt and use new science methods or improved technology to solve problems; and, in the long term, increase the number and diversity of youth pursuing higher education and careers in science, engineering, and technology fields.

Leadership Development

• Youth - 4-H clubs provide positive youth development learning opportunities, allowing young people to experience independence, belonging, mastery, and generosity, as well as, to foster educational and leadership opportunities. Ohio County 4-H has 39 School clubs and 7 after-school/project clubs involving almost 1000 youth. Leadership development programs the members may experience include: Club Officer elections, with officers then leading the meetings, while using correct parliamentary procedure. Club members teach others about diversity and cultures; learn to follow a recipe while applying cooking skills to make nutritious foods; youth research and present a speech; or execute exercise routines. All 4-H activities provide an opportunity for youth to develop valuable leadership & life skills.

• Adults - Ohio County Extension Council members provide valuable community and organizational leadership skills to Extension Programs, program advisory groups, and Extension groups. SEAL and Diversity training provides the perfect subject content to strengthen the leadership of members. Functioning committees include Membership, Legislative, Facilities Development, Programs, and Meeting Room Policy. The CEC played a major role in the selection and hiring of the new FCS Extension Agent. The Extension Council also provides extensive leadership to programs, such as, Youth Ag Days, Family Night at the Farm, and Elected Officials Forum. These leaders are also very active in community and civic leadership positions at the county/ state level.

• Homemakers – leadership skills are developed in Homemaker programs utilizing various methods, such as the Homemaker Leadership Retreat. As a result of this year’s program, the leaders created a shared vision and team purpose for the future of Homemaker programs. Homemaker’s demonstrate their leadership skills thru programs such as, County & Area Homemaker Officer positions, teaching Nutrition lessons in schools, Tamarlane, World’s Greatest Baby Shower, & Youth Ag Days.
Enhancing Ohio Co. Woodlands

Ohio County contains a diverse topography of woodlands (48%) and pasture/cropland (52%), which provides for varied enterprise opportunities. Woodland owners and timber harvesters are improving their timber management skills thru forestry programs, such as, Forestry Fall Webinar Series, Master Logger, and the Woodland Owners Shortcourse. The long-term impacts from these programs are resulting in revenue improvement for woodland owners, improved wildlife habitat, increased woodland productivity, improved woodland health, increased local sawmill revenues, and an overall enhanced quality of woodlands available.

Body Walk Improves Teens Lives

The number of children who are overweight has doubled in the last twenty years. In Ohio County about 80% of our youth eat more fats and sugars than is recommended. Healthy eating and physical activity are important life skills that help children grow healthy and prevent them from developing problems such as obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. The Body Walk program is an opportunity for youth to make lifestyle changes that link nutrition, health, and physical activity as a way to reinforce positive health behaviors and raise the value placed on health. The program is provided to 7th grade Life Skills classes at the Middle School. Body Walk simulates the human body by providing hands-on educational stations that connect being healthy with our diet and physical activity. Educational Stations included: MyPlate, Brain Function, Mouth Care, Healthy Stomach, Healthy Intestines, Healthy Heart, Healthy Lungs, Strong Bones, Strong Muscles, Skin Protection, Exercise, Food Portion sizes, Fats in our Diets, Sugars in our Diets, Juvenile Diabetes, and Healthy Snack choices. After attending one student exclaimed, “Fast foods are bad for us, we are making a lot of bad choices!”

Farmer’s Market Expanding

The Beaver Dam Community Farmer’s Market started in the spring of 2012 with 10 vendors. For 2013, the Farmer’s Market generated $26,722 in sales, for 26 vendors. This reflects a 200% increase from the previous year. An expanded selection of goods were offered such as, fresh fruits, vegetables, meat, eggs, homemade bread, jelly, maple syrup, goat’s milk soaps and herbs. The Ohio Co. Cooperative Extension Service assisted vendors with GAP training, WIC training and provided a shared-use commercial scale for vegetable vendors. Plate-It-Up and Kentucky Proud recipes were highlighted in samples, using market produce and pressure canner testing was offered. Publications were distributed concerning health, nutrition, gardening, and safety. Extension also assisted with scheduling of special events and aided in administering the Farmer’s Market Facebook page. Special events held in conjunction with Farmer’s Market included, children’s day, a local restaurant prepared breakfast sandwiches, the local artist guild provided arts showings, various bands entertained, and a local potter demonstrated pottery making. Vendors are excited about the 2014 season!!!
Expanding Agriculture Awareness

- **Youth Ag Days** - Every fall, 4th grade students and volunteer leaders descend upon Luttrell Farms for “Youth Ag Days”. The program started 17 years ago, with a focus of increasing awareness of our county youth about the importance of agriculture to Ohio Co. and to introduce the youth to careers in agriculture. Over 5,000 youth have gained a greater appreciation for agriculture and a large number of these youth have enrolled in agriculture classes in high school. As one Fordsville 4th grader said, “If farmers didn’t grow crops and raise animals, we wouldn’t have the food we have today!”

- **Ag Camp** – Most youth are not connected to agriculture, in any form, and do not fully understand where our food comes from. The Ohio County Cooperative Extension Service have planted the seeds of agriculture in the lives of over 2,400 Ohio County youth thru Agriculture Camp. The Ohio County Cooperative Extension Office collaborates with local agriculture leaders, UK specialists, and the Ohio County School system, to teach our youth about agriculture in Ohio Co. and Ky, as well as, explore career opportunities in agriculture. Before attending AG Camp the 6th grade students participated in an interactive agricultural program Health and Safety CD. At Ag Camp youth rotate through six educational sessions learning the importance of agriculture to their lives. Results indicated that 85% now understand the importance of soil conservation and 95% appreciate how significant a role grains play in our food supply and how expansive the number of products made from grain truly is.

- **Family Night at the Farm** – To expand our ag awareness programs to reach adults in Ohio County, the Cooperative Extension Service organized “Family Night at the Farm”. Industry presenters discussed the economic impact of agriculture in the areas of poultry production, timber/wood products, corn & soybean production, and the technology used in agriculture today. Over 150 adults and youth attended the first annual “Family Night at the Farm” event this fall. As one attendee said “You have to be a college graduate to operate this equipment today, but I’m glad someone is willing to provide the food and fiber for us.”

**Improved Communication Skills**

When former 4-H members are asked, “What did you gain through 4-H that has made the most impact on your career?”, the skill most often mentioned is public speaking. For the Ohio County 4-H Council and local School system, that’s all the evidence needed to realize the importance of including public speaking and demonstrations in the local school curriculum. The communication program in Kentucky 4-H, focuses on the concept of helping youth to explore, develop, and define their communication abilities in areas, such as, public speaking, personal expression, interaction with others, and professional correspondence. Over 900 youth, participate in the Communications program, each year. The youth demonstrate effective writing skills by researching, organizing, writing a speech then, practice effective public speaking skills by presenting the speech to a live audience. When presenting a demonstration, youth use presentation aids to enhance the quality of the spoken communication. Another program which effectively improves the youth’s communications skills is “Culture Day”. Over 900 students research and provide presentations about the people and lands that form the basis for our country’s customs and foods. In this activity the students take a fascinating tour of different people, states, time periods, and countries from around the world – sharing customs, culture, dance, history, traditions, and sampling of food.