Changing Lives

IN CALDWELL COUNTY

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

Farm to Table

The demand for locally grown fresh produce has increased exponentially over the last few years. With the success of the KY Proud initiative, local Farmers Markets have become the catalyst to provide safe, fresh and nutritious produce to communities across the state.

To raise awareness and increase community participation in the local Farmers Market, Caldwell County Cooperative Extension and Farmers Market supporters collaborated to host a free Farm to Table Dinner which featured all local products. Warren Beeler, Director of the Governor’s Office of Agriculture Policy relayed the State Agriculture Development Board’s plan to have a multi-use pavilion in every county in the state to further promote Kentucky agriculture and local products.

Immediately following the program, county government officials approached Extension Agents and supporters about exploring the possibilities of building a permanent structure to be used for Farmers Market and other local events. A committee has been formed to present a proposal to local government.

“In a small town, local commerce is what makes us unique! It was great to see people from all sectors of our community come together to enjoy local food and learn about the importance of buying local. I hope this is one of the many events to come that educate us all on how our buying habits affect our local community.”

~ Alyson Van Hooser

Priority Program Efforts

• A total of 148 people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
• 62 youth made an impact in their community through service projects
• 18 local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
• 23 Producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
• 79 youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
• 414 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
• A total of 65 individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
• A total of 185 youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
• 48 individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.
Family & Consumer Sciences

Caldwell County Extension Homemakers standing with Souper Bowl of Caring donations

Caldwell County Extension Homemakers

Kentucky Extension Homemakers Association (KEHA) is a volunteer organization that works with the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service to help improve the quality of life for families and Kentucky communities through leadership development, service, and education. Caldwell County currently has eleven Extension Homemaker Clubs. These club members are active in the community and contributed over 7,000 hours of volunteer service for extension-sponsored and community activities this past year. Individual clubs participated in different activities including donating to the Ovarian Cancer Fund, providing cookies for the Red Cross Blood Drive, donating to HOPE and COPE Family Resource Centers, donating to Project Graduation, donating to Feeding God’s Children Backpack Program, and working with 4-H youth. In January, the Caldwell County Homemakers hosted a Souper Bowl of Caring and collected over three hundred non-perishable food items for a local food pantry. Local homemakers also made bibs and burp cloths for the World’s Greatest Baby Shower participants.

LEAP for Health

There is a natural link between nutrition, physical activity and reading. Reading books that focus on preparing and eating healthy foods and being physically active may motivate children to adopt positive food and physical activity behaviors that last a lifetime.

The Family & Consumer Sciences Agent conducted the LEAP for Health program in three local preschools to two hundred students. The LEAP for Health curriculum is a series of lessons using storybooks to teach children about staying healthy, being physically active, and eating more fruits and vegetables. Parent newsletters were provided to reinforce activities at home and encourage parents to engage in conversation with their child. After completing the final lesson, parents were asked to complete a survey to document changes in their child’s behavior toward food. According to the parents surveyed, 84% of children were more likely to try a newly introduced fruit or vegetable. Seventy-four percent of children were more likely to ask for a fruit or vegetable for a snack and 84% were more likely to consume fruits or vegetables at mealtime. Ninety-seven percent were more likely to participate in physical activity.

One parent said, “My child tells me when something is healthy or if it’s a food we should only have sometimes.” Another parent commented, “My child now loves to eat yogurt!”

EFNEP

NEP Program

The Caldwell County Expanded Foods & Nutrition Program Assistant (EFNEP) taught sixty-five limited resources families how to serve more nutritious meals, to keep food safe and to utilize local food resources effectively. Approximately 87% of NEP families made an improvement in the nutritional quality of their diet.

Fifty-two percent of NEP planned meals using My Plate, considered healthy choices, and used the “Nutrition Facts” label. Thirty-eight percent of families increased the frequency of moderate physical activity for thirty minutes per day.

Thirty-seven percent of families began feeding their children breakfast. Thirty-one percent of families demonstrated an improvement in safe food handling practices and hand washing behaviors. Forty-nine percent of families learned to plan meals ahead of time and use a grocery list to guide food selections. A 48% improvement was
shown in food
price comparison behavior. Families showed a 26%
decrease in meals eaten away from home. There
were 9% fewer families who could not afford to eat
properly.

**Caldwell County School Nutrition Classes**

Many limited resource youth have poor
health skills and limited knowledge of the
relationship of health practices and health status.
According to the Community Eligibility Provision
(CEP) program, 63.92% of children in the Caldwell
County Kentucky School system are eligible for free
and reduced lunches.

EFNEP Assistant taught basic nutrition skills
to 458 elementary age youth. These youth were
taught in 19 groups with each group averaging nine
30 minute lessons. The Professor Popcorn
curriculum was used to help youth easily learn basic
nutrition, health and food safety skills. Three
hundred and fourteen youth in school reported
eating a greater variety of foods after the lessons
and 389 youth reported that they had increased
their knowledge of nutrition and its relationship to
overall health. Four hundred and five youth also
reported that they had increased their knowledge of
the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables.
This improved knowledge and adoption of practices
should help these individuals experience an
increased level of health throughout their lives
because of the early age at which some basic health
practices have been learned and implemented.

4 -H

**Life 101 - Preparing Students for the Real World**

The lack of workforce preparation at the high
school level is a growing issue among students in
Caldwell County, KY. The demands for students to
perform well on accountability tests has shifted the
educational focus. Many students don’t receive the
practical knowledge that most employers expect
and need for them to be successful and therefore
some students are being set up for failure.

The Caldwell County 4-H Agent and Family
Resource Center worked together to host a program
for high school juniors to help prepare them for the
"Real World" or life after high school. Life 101 is a
"Reality Store" based educational program for high
school juniors designed to teach basic workforce
prep skills such as completing a job application,
business etiquette and career exploration. Students
are asked to complete a series of questions along
with a job application. Business leaders from the
community assisted in scoring the individual surveys
and applications. The total score determined which
level of job they were eligible for; workforce,
vocational, associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree
and doctorate. Each level had a respective salary
which would be the amount the student would have
to spend in the Reality Store. As in the traditional
Reality Store, students used their monthly salary to
purchase goods and services.

Many of the students had participated in the
Reality Store as 8th graders and were familiar with
the process, but the addition of the job application
and job placement made it more relevant and real
life. Evaluation of the program revealed that this
addition was the most valuable part of the program
with 82% of the participants stating that they were
better prepared to complete a job application.
Afterschool Science Club Offers Opportunities for Science Exploration

A 4-H after-school science club was formed in Caldwell County due to the need to enrich and develop elementary student’s exposure to science, engineering and technology. According to the National Academies Press, “Science, Engineering and Technology permeate nearly every facet of modern life and hold the key to solving many of humanities problems.” It also states that the U.S. position in the global economy is declining because American workers lack knowledge in those fields. The club was led by the county 4-H agent, parent volunteers and one teen leader. There were twelve club members from grades 3-5 and the club met seven times during the school year.

A survey concluded that nine out of twelve club members’ attitude toward science had changed and that they were more likely to choose a career in science, engineering or technology.

This educational opportunity allowed the youth hands-on learning experiences that opened their eyes to the role that science, engineering and technology play in their daily lives. It has equipped them with the knowledge and confidence to explore science as they grow older.

One young man stated “I never realized that science can be so much fun!”

AG

Master Marketer

2015 saw the release of a very successful program aimed at helping beef producers use futures to help manage the many risks of cattle production.

Twenty-seven producers from Caldwell, Christian and Trigg County participated in Master Marketer in 2016. Four sessions were offered with topics on Feeder Cattle Quality, Price Discovery, and Sale Day Considerations, Using Futures and Options to Manage Price Risk for Feeder Cattle, advanced Futures and Options Strategies, and Decision Making for Stocker Operations. Small class sizes offered unique opportunities for interaction and questions with specialists and producers left with materials and many options to start at a level they were comfortable with. Two producers have sold futures contracts and have stated how much more comfortable they are knowing they have a floor under them taking a little sting out of the risk.

Community Supported Farmers Market

The Caldwell County Farmers Market has struggled for many years; few vendors, lack of leadership, competition from re-sellers and lackluster community support were just a few of the problems. A new revitalization attempt was planned to complement the online market and give vendors another outlet for fresh grown produce and local meats. Extension was given the task to coordinate planning meetings with leaders and in a matter of a few weeks a new location was secured and multiple new vendors signed on for the venture. A late start only allowed for ten market days in the 2016 season which generated over $11,000 in sales and an average of one hundred eighty visitors each day.

The season ended with a vendor tour of all farms involved in the market. Plans are already being made for next year’s market which will include another vendor sponsored farm tour and taste of Caldwell dinner for the whole community. Great things happen to communities when good leadership is present.

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