



EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

Changing Lives

IN CLAY COUNTY

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

Maggie Bowling showing produce that was partially funded through the County Agriculture Investment Program.



County Agriculture Investment Program

House Bill 611 and the implementation of the Master Tobacco Settlement Agreement has allocated nearly \$2,000,000 over a 15 year period for use in the restructuring of Clay County Agriculture to alleviate financial problems caused by dependency on tobacco income. Access to capital is always among the top barriers preventing producers from venturing into new enterprises. The Clay County Agriculture Development Council has been instrumental in assisting producer's transition since 2001 by using County Agriculture Investment Programs (CAIP) funds for capital. These funds aid producers by allowing them to adopt best management practices for agricultural enterprises. Over 250 producers have implemented over 750 practices to increase net farm income such as better selection of bulls and heifers, timber stand improvement, hay and machinery storage and fencing. The Clay County ANR Agent coordinates the Agriculture Development Council meetings and all the educational meetings that are required for producers to meet all qualifications to receive funding.

Priority Program Efforts

- **78** producers implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
- **117** youth and adults are utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- A total of **521** individuals reported eating more of healthy foods
- **470** individuals experienced a change in knowledge, opinions, skills or aspiration regarding lifestyles changes (healthy home practices, managing stressors, etc.) that improve personal health
- A total of **131** individuals reported changes in knowledge, opinions, skill or aspirations related to parenting or personal relationships
- **111** youth reported an increase of knowledge of science relating to natural resources and the environment
- A total of **114** adults indicated increased leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension –related leadership programs
- **522** individuals supplements their diets with healthy foods that they produce/ preserve

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Preserving Food

Clay County lives in a food desert. We have limited options for accessing nutritious foods, in order to prepare and consume healthy nutritious meals.



Participants (youth & adults) preparing green beans to be canned.

The Family & Consumer Science Agent presented four Preserving Your Food Workshops to: Grow Appalachia, Chad's Hope, Promise Neighborhood and the general public contacting 54 participants, both adults and children.

After the programs were completed and gardens harvested, results showed 3,212 quarts of produce were preserved (frozen or canned) for consumption in the winter months. Produce preserved were green beans, tomatoes, corn, peppers, jellies, pickles, and salsa saving the consumer \$14,839.44. This allowed them to stretch their food dollars and increase the consumption of nutritious foods grown in their own gardens.

Seven families received a pressure canner, water bath canner, utensils for canning and a set of canning jars. Fifteen participants in the class took home pint jars of green beans, jelly, salsa and pickles.

“This class was very beneficial and I feel more confident.”

“I have canned for years but will be canning differently. Loved the hands-on learning.”

-Program Participants

4-H Teen Club Rain Garden Project

According to the U.S. Department of Education, a mere sixteen percent of high school seniors are proficient in math and interested in a career in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) in the U.S. The U.S. ranks 29th in math and 22nd in science among industrialized nations (U.S. Department of Education). Thus, there is a great need for STEM education and outreach programming that engage, excite, and inform youth.

The University of Kentucky 4-H Natural Resources and Environmental Science Academy (NRESci) provides youth from eastern Kentucky the opportunity to learn about water, soil, forestry, and wildlife resources. First year scholars focus on water, and are provided classroom and hands-on instruction on watersheds, nonpoint source pollution, and water quality. Each first year scholar is



required to complete a community service project with a water-related focus. Two NRESci scholars from Clay County chose to install a rain garden in their county as their community service project.

The two scholars involved their 4-H Teen Club,

Clay County 4-H Teen Club installing a Rain Garden.

and presented information at a city council meeting asking for approval to

install the rain garden at the Rawlings & Stinson Park. After approval by the city council, the county Extension office partnered with the Cumberland Valley RC&D Council to help fund the project.

In the Spring, a one-day rain garden workshop was held at Rawlings & Stinson Park for the Clay County 4-H Teen Club involving the Clay County 4-H Youth Development Agent, the Agriculture and Natural Resource Agent, Extension personnel from the Plant and Soil Science

Department and Horticulture Department, personnel from the Cumberland Valley RC&D Council and Clay County Conservation District. During the workshop, youth participated in hands-on instruction which focused on watershed, stormwater, and rain garden information. Youth calculated the appropriate size of the rain garden, designed the garden, excavated the soil, and planted and mulched the garden. The rain garden is approximately 35 square feet and will collect stormwater from roughly 340 square feet of impervious rooftop area. A pre- and post-test was completed by the youth at the workshop, with a pre-test average of 31% and a post-average of 70%.

Plate It Up Cooking School



Participants enjoying vegetable pizza at Plate It Up Cooking School.

Clay County families have a low health rating, a high adult obesity rate (43%) and a high adult diabetes rate (18%).

Plate It Up! Kentucky Proud recipes promote growing and purchasing local foods and increased consumption of fruits and vegetables. The Cooking School sessions were advertised via Facebook, web pages, newspaper ads, radio spots and newsletters.

The Cooking School sessions were attended by 58 participants. Formal post-program evaluation showed that 100% of participants increased their knowledge of food preparation skills and food safety. Eighty-six percent (86%) intend to grow vegetables or fruit to sell at farmers' markets or for their own use and 74% increased their

consumption of fruits and vegetables. Concerning the recipes, 86% of participants reported that the taste tests encouraged them to purchase or grow fruits and vegetables and 86% reported that the recipe card encouraged them to try the recipes at home.

“I have tasted food I would have never prepared, if not for this program.”

“I have shared this recipe with several people and have taken it to several parties.”

-Program Participants

4-H Camp Brings Community Together

4-H Camp is an exciting opportunity for youth to make new and lasting friendships, build self-confidence, strengthen problem-solving skills, and step out of their comfort zone. Clay County 4-H Camping numbers have continued to increase. This year, 29 campers, 6 teen leaders, and 3 adult leaders attended 4-H Camp. Those who participated gained knowledge on basic food and nutrition, leadership, canoeing, fishing, art, riflery, wildlife and much more. Over 45% were first year campers. This growth is a result of several months of preparation and support from Teen Club members and volunteers. Members of the 4-H Teen Club presented a skit promoting 4-H Camp to several schools throughout the community.



Clay County 4-H Campers at Feltner 4-H Camp in London.

With attendance increasing year by year, more funds were needed. Nearly 50% of Clay County's camping group applied for scholarships. The 4-H Agent raised funds by sending letters and visiting community members to discuss the opportunities and importance of camp. A total of

\$4,892 was received for camp scholarships from several local businesses. This amount was double from 2015 scholarship donations for 4-H Camp. Those who received scholarships wrote kind thank you letters expressing their appreciation.

During camp, Clay County campers were surveyed and as a result:

- 97% of 4-H campers reported that they would attend 4-H Camp in the future.
- 71% reported that they were responsible at camp (took care of their belongings, on time, etc.).
- 93% made new friendships at camp.
- 96% tried something new at camp.
- 90% learned something at camp that will help them at school, home, or other places.

Without the tremendous support from the Clay County community, many kids would have not been able to attend camp. When a community unites for a higher purpose, great things can be achieved and a difference can be made.

Thrill of the Grill



Jeff Casada, Agriculture/Natural Resources Agent, demonstrating grilling techniques with participants.

Clay County is a small, rural Kentucky county that has a very high obesity rate of 43% and a low percentage of the population getting the minimum requirements for physical activity. Families must improve their choices to improve their health. Fruits and vegetables are available to families via gardens, farmers' markets or through grocery stores. The Clay County Cooperative Extension Service partnered with Promise Neighborhood and provided residents a three-session series of programs called "Thrill of the

Grill". These programs were created to cook meals on a grill and incorporate fruits and vegetables to demonstrate healthy food choices. Each session was one and a half hour long and featured grilling techniques, food safety, healthy food choices and physical activity programs for youth. Seven families and eighteen participants indicated through surveys that their knowledge of grilling vegetables increased by 82%, grilling meat by 64%, grilling fruit by 73% and knowledge of food safety increased by 82%. One of last year's participants put his new skills to use helping with grilling for two volunteer organizations. Promise Neighborhood provided each family that completed the "Thrill of the Grill" program with a gas grill and grilling utensils.

**"I will grill out-doors more and increase my vegetable consumption through grilling."
-Program Participant**

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