

# EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Changing Lives*

## IN GRAVES COUNTY

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



L to R: Kelly Mathis, Support Staff  
Tracey Tashjian, 4-H/Youth Development  
Virginia Langford, FCS Agent  
Trent Murdock, ANR Agent

County Extension Agents Tracey Tashjian, Virginia Langford and Trent Murdock along with Kentucky State Aquaculture Specialist, Forrest Wynne, work together to serve the citizens of Graves County. Every four years members of the County Extension Council meet to develop strategies for improving the lives of families, youth and individuals through the Plan of Work. Each year this plan is reevaluated and may be revised to ensure that the most current needs of the community are being addressed. Graves County's plan of work includes key issues such as: promoting environmental education, developing necessary skills for success in life, promoting leadership and personal development, promoting financial literacy, making healthy lifestyle choices and improving agricultural profitability. This Report to the People is a snapshot of the many programs and activities that occur through Extension to help meet the concerns addressed in the Plan of Work. If you are interested in serving on the County Extension Council, the Graves County Extension Office needs you. Please contact our office at 270.247.2334 for more information.

## Priority Program Efforts

- A total of 60 people are now involved in addressing significant community issues.
- 275 youth made an impact in their community through service projects.
- 12 local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture.
- 2 Producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations.
- 1320 youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs.
- 450 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming.
- A total of 70 individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health.
- A total of 475 youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills.
- 1 individual incorporated new or additional conservation practices.

## 4-H/Youth Development

4-H club members Nicole Taylor, Levi Kelley, Garrett Matheny, Benjamin Phillips, Emma Purcell and Jaron Hale along with coach, Tracey Tashjian, returned from the 2015 Future City competition last January with awards for Overall Second Runner-up, People's Choice and Best Speaker Award (Levi Kelley). Forty-seven other teams from Kentucky participated in the event held on the University of Kentucky's campus and sponsored by the College of Engineering. Each August over 35,000 middle school students from 1,200 schools in 37 regions across the United States prepare for the nationally sponsored Future City Contest. This year's theme was "Urban Agriculture, how will we feed our cities in the future?" Students faced many challenges and deadlines throughout the duration of the contest including designing a virtual city using SimCity software, writing a research based essay and narrative detailing their solution, building a model of their city and making a presentation to a panel of judges explaining how their engineering ideas would feed urban populations in a healthy and efficient way. Future City is a nationally sponsored competition for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders that puts its student competitors in real world situations and asks them to be the problem solvers as they brainstorm ideas and design solutions.



GCHS Sophomore Zoe Dowdy State Fashion Revue Board Member  
And Levi Kelley – Electric Project State Fair Reserve Champion



Congratulations to Emma Purcell, state junior egg preparation champion, Levi Kelley, Emma Purcell received junior champion during this summer's State 4-H Egg Preparation Contest. Emma is an 8<sup>th</sup> grade GCMS 4-H member and the daughter of Matthew and Shanda Purcell. The 4-H Egg Preparation is held each year in conjunction with the State 4-H Communications Day. In the contest participants demonstrate the preparation of an egg dish of their choosing while discussing the benefits of eggs in the diet.



This past fall, Teen Club members, David McClure, Levi Kelley, Sarah Throgmorton and Keaton Looper attended the Southern Region Teen Leadership Conference in Crossville, TN. While at the conference, teens met 4-H'ers from eight other states. The group participated in workshops, completed service projects, attended a play and even met an Olympic athlete.



## Family & Consumer Sciences

Throughout life, Kentuckians, both youth and adult need to develop personal and interpersonal skills essential to helping them reach their full potential. To that end, FCS agent and homemaker volunteers

in partnership with Mayfield/Graves County Community Education Program and the Migrant Education Program have presented 11 sewing sessions. Four sessions were conducted with 18 adult learners where each was instructed on sewing machine basics, reading and cutting out a pattern and eventually constructing the project. Only 2 students had previous sewing experience. All 18 students successfully completed a laundry bag and a Christmas stocking in four 1-hour sessions. All indicated pleasure in learning how to sew and expressed interest in advanced sewing classes. Seven sessions were conducted with 13 middle and high school migrant learners. Migrant students were presented with similar information of sewing machine basics, reading and cutting out a pattern and then were instructed in sewing on buttons and hand stitching a pillow. In addition they learned to machine stitch a tote bag and a laundry bag. The class included 3 male students and one made the statement that sewing was for girls and was not happy to be there the first day. After one of the homemaker volunteers reminded him of all the male designers; i.e., Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, Versace, etc., he was sold on the idea and was most willing to learn, eagerly listening and following instructions. All students finished their projects and were very proud of them.



The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans highlights the fact that a large percentage of Americans are overweight and obese and recommends maintaining calorie balance over time to achieve and sustain a healthy weight. The SNAP-Ed Program is designed to play an integral part in healthy weight management and obesity prevention for low-income families. The FCS Agent and newly hired SNAP-ED Assistant, Elizabeth Lamb, partnered to present The Think Your Drink curriculum in the Graves County and Mayfield School systems. By spinning the "think your drink"

wheel, students learn about the high sugar content in soft drinks and sports drinks. They learn about healthy alternatives as they are also learning about the negative health consequences of consuming too many calories from highly sweetened beverages.



## Agriculture

Agriculture plays a critical role in the economy of Graves County. The Extension service is fully committed to the advancement of agriculture in this county and throughout the state. The entire community depends on farmers for food and clothing therefore agriculture is the perfect tool to build a happy and healthy community. Throughout the year, the agriculture agent worked to develop relationships and strengthen the community through programming. Whether it be large row crop farms, pumpkin patches or farmer's markets, Graves County has much to offer the people that live and work here. The vision of the county agriculture agent is the same as the purpose of Extension since its inception; that the people of the county continue to rely on our agency to help them achieve their goals. In order to keep this long-standing tradition moving forward, agents are continually looking for new programming, methods of getting information to people as well as maintaining the programs that we currently have. One new program was developed this year as a result of an increase in individuals with a desire to raise poultry either for meat or eggs. The Calloway County ANR agent and Graves ANR agent provided instructional sessions in raising chickens. Agent has also worked to develop interest as well as continuing education for current and future pecan growers. In the past this has been a source of revenue for individuals and it is important to keep this tradition alive. Classes were provided for individuals with a desire to start and support is provided for those who continue to farm

pecans. Tobacco production continues to be a very important aspect of agriculture in Graves County and these farmers are valuable to our economy. GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) pesticide trainings are provided to keep farmers compliant with grower contracts and state and federal regulations.

## **Aquaculture 2015**

Roughly 50% of U.S. catfish pond acreage has been lost since 2003. A combination of high feed prices, a sluggish economy and continued market pressure from low priced, imported fish have contributed to the decline. Graves and surrounding counties now have about 100 acres of catfish production ponds.

Catfish feed prices were lower in 2015, about \$400.00 per ton including about \$50 to \$60 per ton freight cost. Lower catfish feed costs were due to reduced corn and soy bean prices. Live pond bank prices for catfish received by growers were in the \$1.20 per lb. range, while processors were paying a \$1.17 to \$1.05 in the south central states. Kentucky catfish are sold to live haul truckers to supply fee fishing operations (pay lakes). Small amounts of fish are sold to processors during the fall. Fee fishing demand for locally grown catfish was strong from March through September due to a national shortage of fish and for the most part, consistently mild weather. Sales to fee fishing markets dropped off in October, but fish were sold up until November. Champion Pet Foods of Canada, a high end manufacturer of pet foods, is constructing a feed mill in Auburn, KY. Champion is interested in incorporating Kentucky grown catfish into their line of pet food.

Private pond and lake owners are assisted state wide with all issues related to pond and lake construction and management. During the spring and summer many Agriculture and Natural Resources extension agents and pond owners called the office regarding aquatic plant control, water quality, fish population issues and the occasional fish kill.

I continue to serve as a member of the Southern Regional Aquaculture Center's (SRAC) technical committee where we distribute USDA funds to conduct applied research projects and write and review extension related fact sheets which are used throughout the United States and the world. I am currently serving as the SRAC representative on the

USDA/ NOAA Sea Grant National Aquaculture Extension Steering Committee for three years.

Forrest Wynne  
KSU State Extension Specialist for Aquaculture

*“The 4-H Sewing Program gives children another dimension to their education. It involves hand-eye coordination, math skills and language skills. It also teaches them patience and instills confidence. I am privileged to be a part of such a great program.”*

*- Millie Green*

*Extension Homemaker & Master Clothing Volunteer*

*“Any time need anything, I go to the Extension Office. There has never been a time that they did not help me out. The County Ag Agent has gone above and beyond to make sure my needs are met.”*

*- George Wallace*

*Graves County Farmer*

COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION  
SERVICE

**UK**  
UNIVERSITY OF  
KENTUCKY  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment

**The Graves County  
Cooperative  
Extension Service**

*Extending Knowledge,  
Changing Lives*

For more information, contact us at:  
251 W. Housman St.  
Mayfield, KY 42066  
(270) 247-2334  
Fax: (270) 247-5193  
<http://graves.ca.uky.edu/>