

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Changing Lives*

IN MASON COUNTY

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

Priority Program Efforts

- **962** Citizens (youth & adults) utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- A total of **810** youth and adults who demonstrate increased practical living skills through Extension programming
- A total of **471** adults indicated increased leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- **107** individuals reporting changes in knowledge, opinions, skills or aspirations related to the impact of public policies on agriculture and the environment
- A total of **81** individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- **52** individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.
- **29** Producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
- **18** youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs



Mason County Homemakers on an educational trip to Frankfort

Cooperative Extension Serving Mason County

The Mason County Cooperative Extension Service continues its mission to bring research-based information from both land grant institutions (University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University) to make a difference in your life, your family, and your community. We have a dedicated staff of trained professionals delivering educational programs in agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, horticulture, and community and economic development. We hope that you will take time to review the programs highlighted in this report and we look forward to seeing you at one of our programs soon!

4-H & Youth Development

Agent: Karen Douglas

Impact of 4-H

Because there isn't a measurable item per say; It is often difficult to measure the long-term impact of 4-H Youth Development Programs. But personal testimonies can say a lot. A former 4-Her recently shared this impact with our 4-H Agent. The young lady is a college senior getting ready to enter dental school. While younger and a 4-H member she was very shy and not very outgoing. After getting her involved in the horse program as her first project she then ventured out into other projects and teen activities. She became a club officer several times before her 4-H career was complete and is now vice president in her sorority and vice president in the pre-dental club and a Honors Fraternity member. "My 4-H public speaking experiences gave me countless advantages in the competitive atmosphere of college. Helping me during countless interviews and class presentations. I was also awarded a summer internship for having excellent public speaking skills." She also stated that 4-H gave her interpersonal skills allowing her to work on team projects and group efforts. "4-H is a program that I will always cherish for the memories and the blessings it gave me through learning. Because of 4-H I always use my head, heart, hands, and health for a better me and a better world."

Mason County 4-H Leadership

Mason County 4-H teens have been working on developing leadership and carrying out community service. Teens had discussed and decided upon a community service project that they could do this fall. A group of 14 teens, both boys and girls made 10 lap blankets for nursing home residents. During National 4-H Week they visited the home, met some of the residents while donating the blankets and have plans to go



4-H teens presenting lap blankets to the nursing home.

back, make more blankets. They also want to go play cards and games with the residents.

Reality Store

Eighth grade students at Mason County Middle School hadn't realized what their living expenses or their parents expenses were until our 4-H Reality Store this winter. Almost every eighth grader had a cell phone and mainly smart phones. They couldn't tell us what the phone costs them or their parents until after the reality store.

Our reality store was based on interests and GPA so everybody couldn't be a Dr., vet or lawyer. Many had no clue what their salary would be for their chosen career. After the reality store they were more aware of what careers or jobs pay, what life and its luxuries cost and what children cost. Many realized that they needed to study harder, make better grades and not be so demanding of mom & dad for wants vs. needs. In Operation Preparation they met with professionals in their chosen careers to talk about goals, education and expectations to go along with the reality store experience.

Family and Consumer Sciences

Agent: Rachael Price

Growing to Cook

Kids Camp

Mason County Family and Consumer Sciences program alongside with the Mason County Horticulture program conducted a 4-day day camp where children ages 8-11 were able to learn the basics of growing and cooking food. Participants learned not only the basics of cooking and growing produce they were also able to incorporate other aspects such as money

management at the local farmers market, the importance of food safety, the benefits of physical activity, etiquette, and basic nutrition. The children were also able to take a field trip to a local farm to see where the produce comes from. After the camp the participants were asked what they had learned. Parents were surveyed a few months after the program was completed, and the parents that had responded, 100% stated that they had seen an increase of willingness to help out in the kitchen in preparing meals, and 100% said that they had seen an increase in willingness to try new foods.



One child learning about where food comes from at a local farm

Safety Saturdays

Mason County Family and Consumer Sciences Program alongside the Mason County Health Department has hosted a new program that focuses on home and individual safety. This new program brings in experts within the community to discuss topics such as home safety, fire safety, personal safety, and storm safety. In this interactive forum participants are not only able to learn more about these topics, but they are able to ask the experts questions that they would not typically have the opportunity to ask. After one session one participant had her home inspected and planned on repairing old wiring to make her home safer for her and her family

Agriculture

Agent: Tad Campbell

Master Cattleman

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) estimated that the five counties in the Buffalo Trace Area had 105,000 head of cattle in January 2013, and in 2012, NASS estimated the area produced 127,700 acres of hay. Beef production programming continues to be a strong need assessment from local leaders in the area and Mason County. University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service Agents in the Buffalo Trace Area implemented the Master Cattleman Program in cooperation with University of Kentucky Specialists to offer a 10-week program consisting of 3-hour educational sessions on health, environment, nutrition, management, forages, genetics, reproduction, marketing, facilities, and end product. Thirty-six beef producers participated in the program from the Buffalo Trace region. After the completion of the program a producer self-reported that he improved pasture and herd health management based on the information from Master Cattleman. Another producer realized he was overstocked and culled cows to better manage forages and herd nutrition. The Master Cattleman program continues to build a basis of management techniques for producers to maximize beef production on local operations.



Local producers attend fall beef tour to see management techniques.

Agronomy Day

With an increased emphasis on forage management and more crop acres in the county from corn and soybeans, local agriculture leaders assessed the need to continue to provide producers a program that addresses the changing agronomic climate. The annual Ohio River Valley Agronomy Day is a day long program discussing agronomic areas to address the assessed need. The program is a collaborative effort among University of Kentucky Agriculture Agents, University of Kentucky Specialist, Ohio State University Extension Agent, industry representatives and the Mason County Agriculture Advancement Council that discusses many facets of production. The program is centered on improving management skills as it relates to agronomic crops such as row crops, forages, and vegetables. Weed control, production practices, industry updates, and disease control were the major focus areas for the program. Nearly 70 producers and agriculture retailers attended the program with many positive comments. Continuing educational units (CEUs) were offered for pesticide license holders and one retailer expressed appreciation for offering a diverse program that allowed for CEUs locally. A local producer commented several months following the program that during one of the presentations a speaker talking about pastures said “we seldom overlook our pastures for weed control but they may be our most valuable forage.” The producer said that comment really stuck with him and he never thought of it that way until he heard the presentation. As a result the producer is controlling weeds in pastures and was amazed at how much more grass his pastures had after weed control practices. Programs such as the Ohio River Valley Agronomy Day offer producers the information to make informed decisions that can ultimately allow for higher income and efficiencies for their farming operations.

Horticulture

Agent: Tracey Parriman

The Mason County Master Gardener Program started in 2012 and is on its' fourth cycle of classes and workshops that train volunteers to become certified Kentucky Master Gardeners. The Mason County Master Gardener Association now has 35 active volunteers who commit over 20 hours annually to volunteer service projects in the community. As one of two counties in the district to have a horticulture program, Mason County welcomes those from Mason as well as the surrounding counties to participate in this gardening program. Through participation in the Master Gardener program, three active members have pursued their goal of taking their backyard hobby farm and making it into a sustainable, small farm business. These three members are now an integral part of the Mason County Farmers Market with one serving as the Farmers Market chairmen. Additionally, the Master Gardener Program has also given participants many leadership opportunities. Seven delegates from the Association attended state and national conferences this year enabling them with networking opportunities to meet other Master Gardeners and bring back ideas to the

county. In 2014, one Master Gardener volunteer was afforded the opportunity to travel abroad to the International Master Gardener Conference in South Korea. There she had the opportunity to present the challenges and successes the Mason County Master Gardener Program has faced. The Master Gardeners continue to seek new volunteer opportunities and will be partnering with Mason County Schools in order to assist them with the 3rd Grade Bonnie Cabbage Program. Every 3rd Grader will take home a cabbage plant, learn the importance of eating healthy as well as how to grow and care for a plant.

Community and Economic Development

Mason County Farmers Market

The Mason County Farmers Market has experienced tremendous growth in the last two market seasons. The market welcomed several new growers who contribute a wide range of produce options to local consumers in addition to offering canned, value added products such as maple syrup, honey, pickles, relishes, and a wide array of salsas and jams. Having a local farmers market continues to be an expressed need in the county. With the support of local consumers and businesses, it has helped to raise awareness for buying local making the market become more successful this past year.

In the 2014 season, the Mason County Farmers Market added an additional location to their regular selling point located at the Mason County Extension Office. The 2nd location for the market served as a parking lot located across the street from the Buffalo Trace Health Department. This location served to reach clientele living and working in Downtown Maysville. The market was held every Thursday at this downtown location. Vendors reported increased sales with this added location in addition to increased accessibility of fresh locally grown produce to those who have WIC (Women, Infants and Children) and Senior Vouchers available to spend at the market.

Mason County Family and Consumer Science Extension program is currently offering produce education at the farmer's market corresponding with the distribution of WIC and senior vouchers. This effort was intended to give those individuals receiving WIC and Senior Vouchers knowledge of how to pick out the best produce, how to prepare it, the importance of buying local, and eating fresh.

WIC voucher redemption increased from 36% in 2013, to 55% in 2014. This increase is attributed to better accessibility to clientele at the downtown location.

Additionally this market season, the Farmers Market was able to partner with Tractor Supply Company adding a third market location on Saturday's in the Tractor Supply parking lot. This location has lots of foot traffic and is the preferred market day location by vendors.

Meet some of our Market Vendors



Chris & Mary Breeze, Whispering Breeze Farm



Susan, Keegan, & Kevin McGee, Turtleback Ridge Farm

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**The Mason County
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*Extending Knowledge,
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For more information, contact us at:
800 US 68
Maysville, KY 41056
(606) 564-6808
Fax: (606) 564-9226
mason.ca.uky.edu