



# EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

## *Changing Lives*

IN McCRACKEN COUNTY

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



*The new McCracken County Cooperative Extension Office nearing completion summer of 2016.*

## Master Gardeners Partner with Kiwanis to host Floral Hall at County Fair

McCracken County Extension Master Gardeners (MCEMG), along with the McCracken County Agent for Horticulture, began in winter of 2016 to organize the annual vegetable and horticulture entry process for the county fair held at Carson Park in Paducah. This county fair is held in the month of June. Each year, half of the building called Floral Hall, which also served as the entrance to the fairgrounds, is devoted to horticulture. This event also served as horticultural education for the public as they passed through. Working with Southside Kiwanis volunteers, MCEMG planned, organized, set up and took down the two events of the horticulture division. This fair serves the 63,000 residents of McCracken County. Committees of these MCEMG volunteers donated 160 hours of volunteer time to provide an educational week for patrons of the fair.

## Priority Program Efforts

- A total of **472** people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
- **280** youth made an impact in their community through service projects
- **90** local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
- **95** Producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
- **1426** youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- **11,261** citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- A total of **277** individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- A total of **825** youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
- **81** individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.

# Shooting Sports Program Focuses on Firearm Safety

With the tragedy of the 1997 Heath High school shootings looming in the past, the need for firearm safety became paramount in McCracken County. In 1998 the first 4-H shooting sports program was introduced known as McCracken County Hot Shots. Youth were introduced to the safe way to handle and treat a firearm with shooting accuracy being secondary.

The McCracken County Shooting Sports program has grown over the years, thanks to the volunteers, to include four trap coaches, four junior trap coaches, three rifle coaches, one junior rifle coach, one coordinator and four archery coaches make up the volunteer base of the current 4-H Hot Shots program. A grant of \$4,700.00 was awarded from the National Rifle Association in order to help youth within the program.

This club helps youth gain skills in the areas of leadership, communication, practical skills, along with helping youth strive to accomplish personal achievements. Youth are coached by certified shooting sports instructors that have extensive training and certifications to not only help youth become better shooters, but also responsible and safe handling firearms. Parents are encouraged to help their children by helping volunteer on the range or become a coach.

Youth participate in weekly practices and area 4-H shooting matches that start in just after spring break in April through the third week of September.



*Youth involved with the Shooting Sports program try their arm at archery.*

*"I owe all of my success to 4-H! I never picked up a firearm until my first practice three years ago! Now I am an Olympic champion!"*

*- Noelle, USJOC Bronze Medalist*

Two youth that participate in McCracken County 4-H Shooting Sports were contacted by the (USJOC) United States Junior Olympic Committee to participate in the Junior Olympics, placing in the top five in the air rifle division. Noelle, a youth that won a bronze medal at the Junior Olympics said "I owe all of my success to 4-H! I never picked up a firearm until my first practice three years ago! Now I am an Olympic champion!"

Respect for firearms is certainly the mission of the 4-H Hot Shots program and along with that has come great success stories for our youth. The program continues to thrive with larger enrollment in the program each year.

## Get That Job!

The University of Kentucky Extension Service is providing help to those displaced workers with education on skills that improve; interviewing, résumé writing, how to dress for success and other skills that will increase their marketability through a seminar titled "Get that Job!" The seminar was possible through partnerships with the local Community & Technical College and various educators and through the receipt of a Family and Consumer Science mini-grant. Advertisements for the "Get that Job" seminar were placed in local magazines, newspapers, iList website, on social media pages, newsletters, email distributions and flyers.

"Get That Job" participants were educated on:

- Myers-Briggs test for personality assessment,
- how to properly dress for the interview
- how to ask/answer appropriate questions
- how to improve their current résumé.

The results of the seminar showed:

- 100% of the participants felt the session was very relevant to their needs.
- 100% learned something new in the session that was valuable to them in the job market
- 60% followed up later with a résumé specialist to get additional help at a future workshop

- 90% sought help that day with their résumé and used the corrections to their benefit
- 100% plan to take additional courses of action related to job skills through more workshops offered in the future.
- As a result of the seminar, many of the participants made a further step and went to a resume writing class offered at the Community College to gain a further advantage.

## Calling All Beekeepers

Beekeeping is very important to agriculture in Kentucky, throughout the United States and around the world. Honeybees are responsible for pollinating 30% of our food supply and 70% of all wildflowers.

With estimated sales of \$811,000 in honey production in 2012, it is evident that the honey market in Kentucky is very strong, especially for locally produced honey and specialty honey. Agricultural agents in Crittenden, Livingston, Marshall and McCracken counties noticed a growing interest of beekeeping and honey production in their clients and decided work together to host a Bee School that would serve as an outreach to meet the needs of their bee & honey producers.

With numerous local apicultural businesses and honeybee experts, collaboration immediately commenced. The Bee Barn, one of Paducah's well known apicultural businesses, along with Henry County CO-OP and esteemed apiarist, Kent Williams, all sponsored and contributed to the success of the event.

*"We really enjoyed the demonstration of different types of hives, the long hive presentation was very interesting as an alternative beehive. We will try to implement this with our hives."*

*-Bee School Attendee*



*Chuck Collins, owner of The Bee Barn with ANR Agent, Adam Barnes donating a thousand dollars' worth of tools and supplies to the program.*

In the fall of 2015, the regional "Bee School" was held at the Livingston County Extension Office. Topics covered at the Bee School included: basics of beekeeping, exploring equipment and alternative equipment options, myth busters: farm chemicals and bees, alternative uses for bee products, beehive health and fall inspection routines.

Fifty-one (51) people attended the event. Attendees were asked to rate how valuable the presentations were to themselves and their operation. Exploring equipment and alternative equipment options were the most beneficial followed by beehive health & fall inspections, and introduction to beekeeping.

One person stated "I really enjoyed interacting with an actual hive and seeing the parts of a hive. This bee school was very helpful for beginners and good information was presented on how to get started with hives. I also enjoyed exploring the different products that are made from bee production. I can't wait to apply all of this information to my operation!" Others said, "Today was a very good bee school. I enjoyed it very much. I wish more people would take advantage of the school. Thanks for an enjoyable day," and "We really enjoyed the demonstration of different types of hives, the long hive presentation was very interesting as an alternative beehive.

We will try to implement this with our hives. The Bee Barn presentation was very informative as well."

Crittenden, Livingston, Marshall and McCracken agents feel that this Bee School was very well received and was a great collaboration with community partners. Multiple requests were made by clients to host another Bee School in the future.

## Circuit Smart

The importance of youth strengthening their abilities in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics is the new push across the United States. McCracken County 4-H youth have shown a major interest in this particular area. The use of Lego Robots was extremely important for our home school youth, but the cost of the kits was extremely difficult to manage. The McCracken County Extension Service started a home school 4-H robotics club with 3 adult leaders along with the State 4-H STEM specialist and 13 youth. The goal was to start the year as a learning opportunity and travel around to various contests and possibly compete in one. After practicing multiple times a week for months and seeing a contest the 4-H group decided to compete at the 2016 RCX tournament. RCX, or Robo Challenge Xtreme, is a challenging way for students to expand their knowledge of math and science through a robotics competition. RCX is a team activity designed to strengthen a student's teamwork skills, communication skills, computer programming and problem solving skills.

McCracken County 4-H Circuit Smart won in the Middle School Division of the Lego RCX - Robotics Challenge Xtreme- Avalanche Rescue Competition against 22 other teams. Only the top 2 winning teams in elementary, middle, and high school from each regional division qualified for the State Competition.

Moving onto the State Competition this 4-H group excelled even further. Out of a possible 600 points obtained by tasks completed in under 3 minutes, Circuit Smart finished with 350 points, coming in 25 points behind the 1st place Middle School winners, and a whopping 60 POINTS ABOVE the High School 1st place team! 87 teams participated.

Hosted in Rupp Arena, the Lego RCX competition was part of the statewide Kentucky Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP),- in which over 8,000 students participated. STLP was formed in 1994 through the Kentucky Department of Education and "uses project-based learning principles to empower student learning and achievement through the utilization (and creation) of technology to solve school and community needs. STLP provides a means for students to design, create, collaborate and learn." There are literally 100's of categories into which students can enter and as homeschoolers we should begin to explore these opportunities. A Microsoft executive flew in for the awards ceremony to speak and present a \$10K scholarship to one of the winners.



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