



# EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

## *Changing Lives*

### IN MORGAN 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 Morgan County Extension Service on Prestonsburg Street*

Morgan Co. Cooperative Extension Service is part of the University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture Food & Environment. It is the most comprehensive outreach program of the University.

Extension's mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of Morgan County citizens through non-formal education for the entire family. Working with our other land-grant partner, Kentucky State University, Extension agents and volunteers share university research results and explain it so all age groups can learn and apply the information to their own lives. County agents serve as the link between people in every Kentucky county and experts at the universities. Agents offer programming in the areas of: Agriculture & Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, Family & Consumer Sciences and Community & Economic Development.

Morgan County has 3 extension agents: Sarah Fannin, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Kim Cox, 4-H Youth Development and Nellie Buchanan, Family & Consumer Sciences. Support staff includes: Vernell Sheets, EFNEP Assistant, Rebecca Ball, Program Assistant, Angie Johnson, Administrative Assistant, Scot Kemplin, Facilities Maintenance and Tom Steele, Farm Manager.

### Priority Program Efforts

- A total of **80** people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
- **52** youth made an impact in their community through service projects
- **20** local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
- **5** Producers reported an economic Impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
- **750** youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- **591** citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- A total of **21** individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- A total of **710** youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
- **20** individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.

## Pasture to Plate Program Helps East KY Cattle Producers Improve Performance

The number of cattle in Kentucky being fed to finish, harvested and sold to consumers is increasing every year. A growing number of Kentucky farmers are retaining ownership of cattle through the finishing phase and being paid on carcass performance. A partnership was formed among the Cooperative Extension Service, UK Extension Beef Specialists, and the KY Beef Network to implement the Pasture to Plate program and teach producers the aspects of finishing beef to capitalize on their investment.

The program was replicated in three locations across the state. The Morgan Co. Extension Educational Farm was utilized for the east region. A combination of 10 steers and heifers, both beef and dairy calves in all size ranges and body types, were purchased at 800 pounds +/- and fed to finish at 1300 pounds. Producers followed the calves through the process and learned timely topics: receiving/health programs, feeding to finish, nutrient management, live animal evaluation, carcass evaluation, taste panel evaluation, and consumer preferences. Fifty plus producers participated from six counties. These meetings sparked interest in new management strategies for livestock production and producers are implementing knowledge gained.

Comments from farmers included: "I really didn't know what finished cattle looked like, nor what it took to get them there." "With new local USDA approved harvesting facilities, this program gives my farm a chance to add a new business." "I didn't realize how day to day management could make a difference – I'm used to throwing open the gate and coming back in a month to get them." "I am paying more attention to a finished product now...not just something I drop off at the stockyard."

The Morgan Co. Extension Educational Farm purchased by the District Board provides learning opportunities for Morgan County residents in their own backyard. Planned in conjunction with the County Extension Council Field Day committee, agents and staff hosted an inaugural event with more than 350 folks in attendance. Farm projects including Pasture to Plate Beef demo herd, 4-H & Adult Country Hams, High Tunnels & Fall Gardening, Native Grass plots, Seeders for Renovation Demonstration and 4-H Youth Livestock Clinic were featured. Greater awareness and appreciation of the Extension Farm was developed in the community leading to increased involvement and attendance at subsequent events.

## Improved Forage Practices Increasing Production and Profits

Extension Forage Specialists estimate overall forage production is underutilized by 60% in Ky. Improving hay and pasture production has been a focus of regional educational programs at the Morgan County Extension Farm for Morgan and surrounding counties. Such programs include a regional grazing school, regional hay contest, Extension Field days, Master Cattlemen and Pasture to



Plate. Upon subsequent farm visits with Extension specialists, local producers have been forthcoming about successes experienced as a result of long term participation in these programs. Examples of these stories include:

A Magoffin County farmer is now consistently obtaining soil samples (approximately 20 per year) and working with Extension agents and Extension forage associate to implement his hay and pasture fertilization. He credits this practice with almost doubling hay output and adding several weeks to his grazing window. One Morgan County farmer attributes raising his mower height to increasing his hay production by one third and spending less dollars on weed control as a healthier stand withstands competition. "After hearing about the need to raise my mower height and seeing videos of regrowth after overgrazing, I intentionally left one field higher. The difference was all I needed to see. No one is allowed to mow my fields any less than five to six inches – I used to scalp my fields, but no longer."

## Financial Planning Makes a Difference for Morgan County Families and Farms

Estate planning is important to protect and ensure personal and financial goals are realized after death. Many people fail to plan for transfer of their possessions and property at the time of death. A properly executed estate plan can reduce both family stress and federal and state tax obligations while allowing the estate to be settled in an expedient fashion, saving both time and money.

Many individuals perceive estate planning as complicated, costly and unpleasant; thereby, leaving possibly their family, farming operation or small business at risk. To address this need, the Morgan Co. Extension Service hosted an Estate Planning workshop for families and farmers emphasizing the estate planning process. Focus included: developing an estate plan, establishing goals for that plan, specific estate planning tools (Power of Attorney, Trusts, and Wills), the probate process, insurance, funeral planning and gifts and estate tax laws. 22 consumers participated in the workshop. Follow up surveys indicated 100% of respondents increased their ability to manage/address current estate planning issues. Additionally, 100% of attendees planned to create and implement at least one specific estate planning goal and strategy as a result of participating in the program. One program participant said: "The Estate Planning Program gave an overall view to help me make better decisions." Morgan Co. participants have reported an increased number of wills, trusts, power of attorney designations and family discussions concerning transition goals. One farmer indicated that upon establishing a family trust, the matriarch is now at ease and felt assured that the family farm would remain with the family.

## Georgia/Kentucky State Fair Exchange Trip

The Tufts University study of 4-H Youth Development has shown that youth who participate in 4-H tend to excel over peers. However, with many 4-H programs, it can be hard to see the impact in a short period of time. To overcome that challenge and provide a unique opportunity, 4-H Agents from Fleming, Rowan, Lawrence, Morgan and Magoffin Co. planned and implemented a Georgia Exchange program.

The program was designed to expose teens to the similarities and differences of 4-H programs in Georgia and Kentucky. It enabled the teens to network and establish relationships with a diverse group as well as obtain a great deal of

communication and leadership skills. While in Georgia, the teens participated in focus groups to discuss state teen specific programs. Along with the discussions, the teens also enjoyed the Georgia State Fair.

The teens provided verbal feedback to the agents:

~"It was fun and allowed me to interact and learn about other 4-H'ers. I was able to meet and bond with other teens from Kentucky that had the same interest as I did".

~"During the trip to Georgia, I learned about the community and lifestyle of my fellow 4-H'ers. I made lots of new friends and still talk to them regularly."

~"I for one had an awesome experience in Georgia. I was introduced to a lot of great things I would never find here in Kentucky. I met extraordinary people from Georgia and learned about their culture and how it's not so different from ours."

~"It was fun finding out about how different but still the same 4-H is there compared to here. I loved sitting in a circle with them asking questions and learning about their program."

~"Being able to actually meet and learn about people from another state was something that I really enjoyed. Their State Fair is a lot different than ours and seeing one like that was really cool."



## 4-H Teen Leadership Academy

In years past Morgan County has had a very active 4-H Teen club at the county and state level, but in order to address the need for more youth leadership at the district level, a collaborative effort by Magoffin, Rowan and Morgan counties has continued to offer the Teen Leadership Academy program in our area. The nine month program focused on developing stronger leadership and communication skills helping participants be better prepared, not only for future 4-H opportunities, but also career and community.

The Academy sessions met one day each month with a different focus. Topics such as college and career preparation, communication, government and public service, leadership, community service and volunteerism were covered. The program had over 1200 contact hours with participants. At the

conclusion of the program, each participant recognized a higher understanding of citizenship, volunteerism, leadership, and team building. A parent of one of the TLA participants stated, "My daughter has gained so much from this program. I am so thankful she had the opportunity to do this because she has been exposed to a variety of real life situations in our communities that she wouldn't have in a classroom. She looks forward to TLA every month and so do I. I am definitely going to recommend this program to my friends who have teenagers."

**Know the 10 signs Early Detection Matters - Alzheimer's Disease Awareness**

According to the Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's disease is an incurable brain disease that causes slow, progressive decline in memory, thinking and reasoning skills. An estimated 5.2 million Americans live with Alzheimer's disease, including over 200,000 individuals younger than age 65. In 2010, 161,800 people lived with Alzheimer's disease. District I Extension Homemakers, identified the lesson, "Know the 10 signs - Early Detection Matters" as the 1st priority for extension leader training workshops.

The evidence based program was offered to 51 leaders who presented the program to 2500 extension homemakers. As a result of the programs offered 98% gained knowledge of the 10 signs of Alzheimer's disease, 91% were able to distinguish between normal age-related changes in memory versus signs of Alzheimer's disease. Participants learned the primary risk factors, the process of getting a diagnosis for Alzheimer's, and reported learning information valuable to them and their families. The end result will reduce the fear of seeking medical attention from health care providers.

**"Walk Around Kentucky" increased physical activity of Morgan County Residents**

According to 2014 CDC Statistics Report: The Diabetes rate in the USA is 9.3% compared to Morgan County with 14.2% (kentuckyhealthfacts.org) data source Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) indicates in Morgan County the prevalence of overweight 74%; Obesity Prevalence 38% and the staggering statistic that the number of Morgan

County adults who consume 5 or more fruits and vegetables per day is 5%.

Research indicates losing even a small percentage of weight, by eating healthier and becoming more active can reduce one's risk of Type 2 Diabetes 50%. With this goal in mind and realizing the obesity epidemic threatens the quality and life expectancy of Morgan County residents, along with the rate of sedentary lifestyle in the county, the FCS agent partnered with Morgan County Diabetes Coalition, Morgan County ARH, Gateway District Health Department to plan and conduct a county-wide family wellness challenge to promote physical activity. The "Walk Around Kentucky" challenged family groups to become more active together. The 8 week program involved 27 participants including 6 teams and one individual participant.

Participants logged minutes or steps of physical activity and were encouraged to participate in teams within their community, workplace, church or family. The results of the program indicated participants logged 46,337 minutes plus 451,975 steps of increased physical activity. The increase in physical activity will deter the onset and/or reduce the risk of Type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases. A win/win for participants, community & state in healthcare costs, longevity, vitality and economic gain.

***The staff of the Morgan County Extension Service would like to thank all of the volunteers for their countless hours. Without our tireless volunteers, we could not serve the county in the same capacity.***



**University of Kentucky**  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
*Cooperative Extension Service*

Morgan County

*Extending Knowledge,  
Changing Lives*

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