



EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

Changing Lives

IN NICHOLAS COUNTY

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



Environmental Camp 2016

As 2016 comes to a halt and 2017 is on the not so distant horizon, it's awesome to look back at this past year's trials, hard work, and most of all accomplishments. Many things have been inconsistent, however most of them were out of our control. The weather for instance has either been too wet or too dry for ideal growing conditions most of the season. One thing that has been consistent though, is the amount and quality of programming coming out of the Extension Office.

Over the past year we have, increased participation with many of our clubs and organizations, offered educational information on upcoming obstacles and opportunities. All while strengthening existing programs and relationships with new knowledge and steadfast dedication. This is also our chance to thank everyone in the community for all of their support of our programming, without you, none of this would be possible! We are always seeking new volunteers to lead or help out with various organizations and programs, if you would like more information about a volunteering opportunity, please don't hesitate to call the Extension Office.

Priority Program Efforts

- A total of 68 people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
- 27 youth made an impact in their community through service projects
- 31 local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
- 90 Producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
- 15 youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- 80 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- A total of 190 individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- A total of 54 youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
- 11 individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.

CAIP Program

The CAIP cost-share (Phase-1) program continues to be popular in Nicholas County and for very good reason, its positive effects can be noticed throughout the agriculture community and beyond. In 2016 the CAIP program brought approximately \$243,000 into the Nicholas County community. With those dollars, 81 applicants were approved to complete cost-share programs according to the Governor's Office of AG Policy guidelines.

If you did not get approved for a project you may be asking yourself, "well how do these dollars still positively affect me...?" When you really start thinking about it, approximately \$250,000 coming into the county has a positive effect on the local economy. This money is spent (mostly locally) purchasing building materials, products, and hired contracted labor. It would be interesting to know, actually how many times these dollars turn over in our community. Not to mention, some of this money annually goes toward the funding of the FREE dead animal removal program, and Soil Conservation equipment rental that we have in our county. Both programs are available to every member of our community! If you have any questions about CAIP programming feel free to call or stop by and talk to me!

Crop Production

Tobacco production is still a vital part of the agriculture industry in Nicholas County. In the spring of 2015 the Extension Office hosted a Tobacco GAP (Good Agriculture Practices) training, there were approximately 55 producers in attendance. Fast forward to the spring of 2016, we hosted the same type of meeting and had a total of 75 producers in attendance! During these meetings attendees had an opportunity to hear from University of Kentucky Extension Tobacco Specialist Dr. Bob Pearce. Pearce shared information about labor laws, production practices, and market outlooks. Dr. Pearce highlighted black shank management methods during this meeting which proved to be very important during the 2016 growing season. Farmers found widespread black shank infections in fields that had never before been affected by this disease. In some

cases, recommendation could be made to save the crop, and in others situations the fields were a total loss. However, it was through the information gained in these meetings and Dr. Pearce's guidance that producers and myself knew what to do in each farmer's individual situation.

Although many farmers still rely on tobacco as a main component of their farm income, some farmers are branching out and experimenting with alternative crops. Out of all these new crops hitting the scene none have caused quite the stir that industrial hemp has.



Black shank in a Nicholas County Producers 2016 Crop

In 2016 Nicholas County had three industrial hemp producers in the county, I look for this number to continue to grow. At our 2016 Producers Meeting the guest speaker was Dr. David Williams of the Industrial Hemp Research Program, he highlighted the key point of industrial hemp production. In summary this crop is all still in the "research" stages and it is a learning curve for all parties involved. Hopefully the market and growing opportunities will continue to flourish and this crop will be another option for Nicholas County Farmers.

Nicholas County Students Meet

Professor Popcorn

Throughout the 2015-2016 school year Professor Popcorn has been introduced to Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth grades at Nicholas County Elementary School.

Professor Popcorn is a nutrition education program whose goal is to encourage healthy eating habits, physical activity and food safety. It also introduces students to new foods and food combinations. Each session students receive a taste of a special snack that goes along with that topic. Students have been treated to air popped popcorn, spinach smoothies, homemade chex mix with chickpeas, fruit and yogurt smoothies and rice cakes just to name a few!



Delicious smoothie made by students

Nicholas County students receive this curriculum on a weekly, monthly, or one time basis as a part of the Nicholas County 4H School Enrichment Program. Second grade was treated to a six week series in the Spring, Third grade participated in monthly sessions from September – April, and Fourth and Fifth grades received a one-time review on topics they had previously been taught in Second and Third grades.

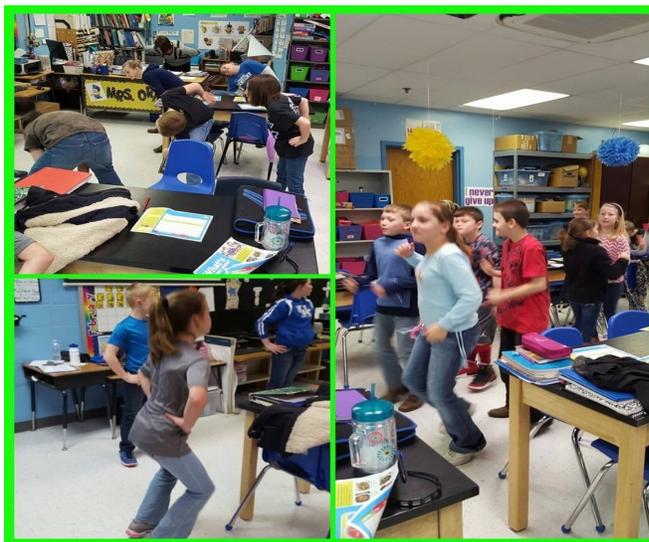
During the 2015-2016 school year 332 students received lessons from the Nicholas County Extension Service and 4H utilizing Professor Popcorn. The Nicholas County Extension Council identified health and nutrition education as a priority on the plan of work. More specifically they wanted citizens to gain knowledge in nutrition and exercise and that citizens would increase physical activity and practice healthy eating. Teaching Nicholas County youth with Pro-

fessor Popcorn touch on both of these!

In conjunction with the school programs, 72 second grade students were given a pre and post evaluation. At the conclusion of the six week series we saw that:

- 92% were able to select healthy snacks with presented with various healthy and non-healthy options
- 89% identified physical activities when presented with a list of common games/hobbies
- 91% identified foods in the vegetable groups
- 94% identified foods in the fruit group
- 93% identified foods in the grains group
- 85% identified foods in the dairy group
- 83% identified foods in the protein group

Introduction of a nutrition program as early as the second grade and continued reinforcement through grade five will help create lifelong habits. These healthy eating, physical activity, and food safety habits are being practiced now and will help students through the rest of their lives.



Fourth graders participating in physical activity

Nicholas County Citizens Learn Money Habitudes

In keeping with identified needs in Nicholas County, an emphasis was placed on educating citizens about money and financial management. One part of our 2015-2016 Plan of Work was to create family stability through basic life skills; financial management feeds directly into that goal.

The Nicholas County Cooperative Extension Service has partnered with the Nicholas County Homemakers, Family Resources Service Center (FRYSC) and Community Action Council to offer multiple budgeting and financial management programs and classes.

Four workshops were taught with help from Nicholas County FRYSC and Community Action. These workshops focused on creating spending plans, how to cut costs, prioritizing bills, and differing between needs versus wants. Each of the four workshops offered hands on training in creating a budget and ample time for question and answer and sharing tips between participants.

Success of the program is measured by the number of referrals by FRYSC and Community Action each year. Success is also measured by testimonials from participants. One participant who attended in 2014 and 2015 reported that she began Christmas shopping in January to help with spending. Another reported "using monthly meal plans to save money on food." Others have testified to setting aside "X" amount of money for Christmas, birthdays, special events and being able to save it throughout the year and not overspend!

Our monthly Lunch and Learn session offered by Nicholas County Homemakers featured a Financial Affairs lesson. The emphasis was on financial planning later in life. Some of the same topics were covered as in previous classes; for example, needs versus wants, budgets, planning, etc. An added emphasis was also put on retirement savings, reverse mortgages and paying off debt. At the con-

"If this office were a coach, you would have a winning team."

- Silas Cleaver III, Nicholas County Producer

clusion of the program we found that 83% of participants found the materials were informational and 66% plan to implement at least one strategy to help improve their financial health!

In teaching budgeting workshops over the past three years, it is evident that skills are being learned and applied to daily life. Numbers of referrals have gone down, use of spending and meal plans have increased, and participants are more engaged with classes and offer tips to other attendees. Money saving tips, tricks and techniques will help families and individuals become more financially stable.



Community Action parents learn budgeting basics.



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