



EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

Changing Lives

IN TAYLOR COUNTY

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

My name is Kara Back, and I am the Taylor County Extension Agent for Horticulture Education. I am originally from Cumberland County, Kentucky. I graduated from Western Kentucky University this past spring with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture Education. Growing up, I worked on my family's farm, assisting my parents with our beef cow-calf operation and vegetable garden. Agriculture is a vital part of our lives, and my goal as an extension agent is to provide researched based educational information and opportunities for the citizens of Taylor County.



Taylor County Up Close

In the fall of 2014, a presentation of the demographics of counties in the central part of the state was presented at an Extension Leadership Forum. Taylor County delegates began discussing how it would be informative to have an educational meeting for Taylor County.

The Taylor County Extension Service in cooperation with the Campbellsville/Taylor County Chamber of Commerce and Team Taylor County planned a community education meeting on the changing demographics of Taylor County and how adjoining counties compared.

Priority Program Efforts

- A total of **124** people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
- **12** youth made an impact in their community through service projects
- **186** local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
- **162** producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
- **80** youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- **142** citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- A total of **123** individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- A total of **74** youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
- **37** individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.

Over 50 participants learned where we are now, where we have been and where we are projected to be demographically through 2050. It was an eyebrow raising experience as one participant commented, "I can't believe those counties are projected to outgrow our county over the next 35 years!" Special attention was given to the Baby Boomers as they carry the majority of the wealth and as they move further into the aging population.

At the end of the meeting an individual asked, "What do we do now? Will we be able to get more information?" Team Taylor County chairperson requested copies of PowerPoint presentation and handouts to provide to board members who were not able to attend the meeting. Another meeting will be conducted in 2017 to understand the demographics more so that plans may be made to make a positive impact on our county's future growth.

LEAP for Health

According to the 2012 Kentucky Parent Survey, about one in seven parents (14%) said their child got enough fruits and vegetables on five or six days during the week. A new KIDS COUNT Data Snapshot finds that about two-thirds (64%) of Kentucky children are not meeting an important benchmark: reading at grade level at the start of fourth grade. In addition, Kentucky is one of only 12 states where the reading proficiency gap between students from higher- and lower-income families widened by more than 30 percent from 2003 to 2013. Because the need for healthy reinforcements is so great for our Kentucky children, the LEAP for Health program was implemented in Taylor County.

The LEAP for Health curriculum is a series of lessons using storybooks to teach children about eating more fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, whole grains, being physically active, and staying healthy. The curriculum targets children ages pre-school through third grade and their families. Each lesson includes reading a story, tasting new foods, a family newsletter with additional information, and a recipe with suggested activities to reinforce the lesson.

The program was taught by the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) agent and Nutrition Education Program (NEP) assistant to Taylor County/Campbellsville preschool and school age children. Classroom teachers continue to be highly impressed with the curriculum and children's reactions. Post lesson observations and surveys provided by the teachers concluded by the end of the nine month program, 97% of children demonstrated proper hand washing; 100% of children sampled a variety of foods which included fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, or whole grains; 99% of children were physically active for 30 minutes or more; 90% of children could identify a new fruit or vegetable during the program; 87% of children would choose a healthy snack; and 100% of children left the sessions knowing at least one good health habit and benefit of exercise and fruit/vegetable consumption.



Understanding Social Media

Social networking is nothing new, humans have been interacting with each other since the beginning of time. It has, however, taken on an entirely new meaning since the rise of the digital age. With the help of social media networks, today's relationships are often begun on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Not only can social media sites help make connections to one another, it can also help many organizations and individuals become more efficient and creative.

Because the momentum of social media has been so great in recent years, it is hard for the Baby Boomers and other older generations to "keep up" with all the changes. To address this

need the Taylor County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent taught an Extension Homemaker lesson titled "Pin It and Create It: A Lesson on how to use Pinterest".

Pre and post evaluations were distributed. As a result of the program, 66% of participants could identify the purpose and benefits of Pinterest compared to 13% before the program. Sixty-one percent (61%) of participants were confident in their ability to locate and gain access to Pinterest compared to only 26% before the program. Fifty-five percent (55%) of participants were confident about using Pinterest, compared to 5% before the program. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of participants were confident about the safety precautions when accessing Pinterest compared to 5% before the program. Forty-five percent (45%) of participants were confident in their ability to connect with others on Pinterest compared to 5% before the program. One particular participant stated, "I learned how to create a group board. I didn't know I could add pictures taken by me to Pinterest! This will be wonderful for me to use to plan events."

State Dairy Cow Camp

The Taylor County 4-H organization hosted the 2016 State Dairy Cow Camp with over 76 youth participating. The event was attended by 130 people from across the state. Over \$1000 worth of money and or items were donated to help



make the day a success. A local accountant was the chairperson of the event and was responsible for securing a large amount of the donations. Goody bags were distributed to youth and adults containing information about the Dairy Industry.

The t-shirt design and theme were created by volunteers and a volunteer leader coordinated the printing and distribution of the shirts for the event. Extension staff helped on the day of the event with 20 youth and adults leaders helping to plan and implement the event. Awards were distributed to each class with the top ten youth in each age division receiving an item that could be used in farming in addition to the usual awards.

Row Crop Risk Management

Grain producers enjoyed record grain prices between 2008-2014. With these record prices, producers acquired additional assets and debt thus putting a financial burden on some producers as prices have become depressed. To help producers survive these turbulent times, a Row Crop Risk Management Seminar was developed with 22 producers participating. Some producers were stunned as we worked through the commodity price outlook and budget portions of the seminar.

If USDA's price outlook holds true, average yielding producers would be operating on equity after the 2016 crop year and high yielding producers after the 2017 crop year. Machine costs and land rental costs were large contributors on the cost side. One producer stated the management seminar was an eye opener and depressing meeting. He was going to have to make many changes to survive this period of depressed prices. According to a post survey over 90% of the respondents reported the seminar was useful for helping them survive the turbulent times.

Youth Heifer Chain

At the request of the Taylor County Cattlemen's Association to have an educational livestock project for youth, a Youth Heifer Chain Program was developed and implemented. The goals of the program are to encourage involvement in the dairy and beef industries, learn proper animal husbandry, and personal responsibility and pride. The program has appealed to youth and families beyond traditional livestock

producers. Since 2007 inception of the program, 72 youth have participated.

The Taylor County Cattlemen's Association has administered \$119,250 grant funds from the Tobacco Master Settlement Funds to support the program. A committee of seven dairy and beef producers oversee the program in conjunction with the Taylor County 4-H and Agriculture Agents. To receive a heifer, the youth must sign a contract agreeing to attend educational sessions on animal safety, nutrition, health, reproduction and attend a fitting and showmanship clinic. In addition, the youth are required to show at the Taylor County Fair and return a heifer to the program.

Of the 72 participants, 32 youth have never owned livestock before, 53 youth are still engaged in livestock production and 11 youth are showing in county, state and national livestock shows.

Many parents have commented that the Heifer Chain Program has been the best activity their child has ever been involved in. Many grandparents have commented this program has bought their child's family closer together.



4-H Camp

Youth who attend 4-H Camp acquire vital leadership skills, learn responsibility and gain social interaction skills as well as gaining an understanding of nature and our environment. The community supports the program monetarily by providing donations for camp scholarships. Eleven (11) local businesses and individuals donated \$1,838 which allowed 11 youth to attend 4-H Camp. Their experiences and memories made at camp would not have



been possible without the generosity of the community.

Fifty-eight (58) youth attended camp with 23 attending for the first time. Forty-seven (47) campers made a new friend's at camp. Eighty-seven percent (87%) learned something at camp that will help them at home, school, or other places, 89% felt good about something that they accomplished at camp, and 94% were responsible at camp by taking care of themselves and their belongings, cleaned up after themselves and were on time all or most of the time at 4-H Camp.

A parent and camper attended a parent/camper orientation prior to leaving for camp to discuss camp rules and procedures. A volunteer drove the luggage bus from camp and a volunteer performed the lice checks. Seven adult leaders, three teen leaders and one counselor in training attended a leader orientation leadership training in an effort to prepare them to serve as effective leaders at camp. Most of the adults and teens have pledged to return to camp as leaders next year.



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Taylor County

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