

Grant County Annual Report | 2016

Putting Knowledge to Work!

West Virginia University Extension works to provide “solutions in your community” through key program areas including agriculture, environment and natural resources, 4-H youth development, food and nutrition, health and wellness, financial planning and home gardening. These research-based programs and services are available to all residents of Grant County thanks to the tremendous support of our community members, local organizations, volunteers and local partners – the Board of Education and County Commission.

Highlights

2015: A Year of Change in Grant County Extension.

After 49 years of dedicated service to West Virginia University Extension in Grant County, Rebecca Ketterman retired as the administrative secretary. Becky was recognized for her many years of support at both the CEOS and 4-H Achievement programs. Teresa Nazelrodt was hired as the new administrative secretary in March. She has done a tremendous job her first year while not only learning her role but also providing extra support for the many ongoing programs normally conducted by the 4-H Youth Development /Families and Health agent. Kassidy Haslacker resigned from this agent position after being on maternity leave. Alexandra Coffman is scheduled to start as the new 4-H Youth Development/ Families and Health agent in January 2016.

Brad Smith, Agriculture and Natural Resource agent, role changed mid-year when funding for the West Virginia Small Ruminant Project was discontinued. We lost the assistance of Andy Walker, program assistant in Grant County and Brad’s duties as the director of the project to provide statewide assistance and support to the sheep and goat industries are no longer supported by the WVU Davis College of Agriculture Natural Resources and Design.

In addition to these major changes the WVU Grant County Extension Office moved to a new location at 114 North Grove Street. We are now located just above the Courthouse in the old Stark Vo-Ag Building. Our contact information remains the same: phone - 304-257-4688, email – grantcountyextension@mail.wvu.edu , webpage – grant.ext.wvu.edu , Facebook – WVU Grant County Extension Service.

4-H and Youth Development

Low-resource children have been found to have lower vocabulary levels when they enter school and continue to be behind other children throughout their school years. Children who participated in Energy

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Express in our county and who read and practice reading skills in the summer, will enter the new school year better prepared. The better prepared students are to learn, the more likely they will graduate from high school and pursue college training.

- 52 youths participated in Energy Express – a nutrition and summer literacy program for low-resource youth.
- All 52 showed positive changes in letter-word identification, reading fluency, passage comprehension and broad reading among the children who participated in Energy Express from our county.

In 2015, we celebrated 100 years of 4-H camping!

- 86 youths attended county 4-H camps.
- 11 Grant County 4-H members attended a state 4-H camp.
- 83 youths and 61 adult volunteers participated in the Potomac Highlands 4-H Horse Camp.
- 189 youths were active members of community 4-H clubs.
- 73 in the Health Rocks program.
- 107 in ATV safety programs.
- 186 in STEM programs including the National Youth Science Day Experiment.
- 28 4-H members participated on Forestry, Livestock, and Horse Judging Teams.
- A total of 964 youths were reached through 4-H activities.
- 189 4-H'ers in Grant County gained citizenship/leadership skills.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

As farmers fine tune their management of feed production, crop and livestock nutritional management and livestock marketing, they will reduce production expenses and be able to reap larger financial gains from the sale of livestock. This increased revenue will result in farmers increasing their incomes and contributing to the general economy.

Identifying animals that excel for economically relevant traits is essential to the improvement of livestock, the sustainability of animal agriculture and our ability to feed a growing global population. Performance evaluation programs provide a means to identify superior performing animals by managing them in a similar environment. Because the environment is similar, the observed differences can be attributed to genetics, meaning that the animal has the ability to pass on that superior performance to its offspring.

- 20 cooperating breeders participated in the 2014-2015 Wardensville Bull Evaluation Program, consigning a total of 162 bulls of three different breeds. 151 bulls

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completed the evaluation program and 82 were offered for sale. Buyers selected 82 bulls at bids ranging from \$2,400 to \$9,800. Gross sales totaled \$353,200 for an average of \$4,307/head. In 2015, the WBEP was a collaborating partner with the National Program for Genetic Improvement of Feed Efficiency in Beef Cattle (<http://www.beefefficiency.org>) supplying DNA samples along with individual intake, performance and pedigree data on 151 spring-born and 100 fall-born bulls. Additionally, approximately 120 youths from four counties were taught about livestock evaluation and the appropriate techniques for freeze branding for identification of livestock.

- In the West Virginia Small Ruminant Performance Tested Sale, 10 replacement ewe lambs, 10 doe kids, 3 meat goat bucks, and 16 ram lambs from eight producers sold for \$12,275. 58 rams and meat goat bucks were evaluated during this 12-week performance test.
- All of the rams offered for sale at the West Virginia Purebred Sheep Breeders Show and Sale had scrotal measurements completed and their data was reported to potential buyers on the sale sheets. The 194 sheep and goats marketed in this sale sold for \$75,015. This sale included the top 6 indexing rams from the fall-born performance test program.
- In this inaugural year, 48 West Virginia youths competed for four \$1000 Young Shepherd Awards. These awards were used to purchase breeding sheep or goats. Additional West Virginia Purebred Sheep Breeders awards included drawings for two \$75 gift certificates used towards the purchase of breeding sheep or goats. They additionally provided \$2,100 in premiums for the 2015 Mountain State Preview Show which had youth exhibiting 13 market steers, 15 breeding heifers, 32 market lambs and 28 market goats. They additionally provided financial awards to youth receiving champion awards with market animals purchased through this sale. Other youth activities conducted during the West Virginia Purebred Sheep Breeders show and sale included the educational evening which had 28 youths gaining knowledge on their projects and practicing their showmanship skills, and the judging/skill-a-thon contest which include 77 youths from five states.
- Conducted Breeding Soundness Exams on 18 rams and bucks for six producers. Two of these producers valued this service enough that they hauled their rams across the state to Petersburg in order to have this service completed.
- Pregnancy diagnoses via ultrasonography was conducted on approximately 400 ewes and does for eight producers. Statewide presentations about reproductive management and synchronization of ewes and does, continues to expand on the number of producers requesting these services.
- Six Regional Wool Pools were conducted to market 79,605 lbs. of wool for 200 shepherds from across the state. The wool returned \$88,912.47 to the West Virginia economy.

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- 53 Grant County 4-H'ers with livestock projects received Quality Assurance Training. The Tri-County Fair 4-H and FFA Market Livestock Sale sold 183 market livestock projects for \$223,900.
- 195 soil tests, involving 3,127 acres were performed.
- The winter educational dinner meeting series included 3 sessions on Transition Planning, Baleage and Optimizing Forages and was again conducted jointly in Grant and Hardy Counties. \$2,600 was collected from area sponsors to conduct these dinner meetings and participation was up with 278 area farmers participating in the 3 monthly meetings. The evaluation of this statewide project showed that a large portion of the producers are not only gaining knowledge from the programs but are actually implementing the production techniques, improving their economic outlook and managing risk on their farms. Over half of the survey respondents have increased their farm income and 87.64% of those that have felt that this difference was either "somewhat" or "a lot" due to the dinner meetings. Individual consultations and assistance was provided as requested by farmers implementing new management practices for over 16 farmers, all of which implemented at least one new practice relating to these topics.
- 31 pesticide private applicators were recertified in Grant County through the winter educational dinner meetings and other trainings conducted throughout the year.

Families and Health

According to a report by the West Virginia Governor's office in 2013, if West Virginia is to successfully reverse high health care costs and poor outcomes, it is going to require specific changes in the health care system that address high-cost health conditions and improves the overall health and health care of West Virginia families. Our county's Family Nutrition Program plays an important part in improving overall health by training youth to make healthy food and activity choices early in their lives which will lead to better health outcomes over time for them and their families.

- Nutrition education encourages youth to try a variety of healthy foods. 326 youths were reached in 2015.
- 205 youths in the Family Nutrition Program improved their ability to choose foods according to Federal Dietary Recommendations.
- 83 youths in the Family Nutrition Program improved their use of safe food handling practices.
- 82 youths in the Family Nutrition Program improved their physical activity practices.
- 101 members of the Grant County Community Educational Outreach Service provided opportunities to share, learn, work and serve others throughout the community.

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Programs and activities offered by the West Virginia University Extension Service are available to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin, and marital or family status. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Director, Cooperative Extension Service.

The WVU Board of Governors is the governing body of WVU. The Higher Education Policy Commission in West Virginia is responsible for developing, establishing, and overseeing the implementation of a public policy agenda for