

Ohio 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 Ohio County thanks to the tremendous support of our community members, local organizations, volunteers and local partners – the Board of Education and County Commission.

Highlights

The 4-H program in Ohio County continues to grow. The number of enrolled 4-H members in 2015 increased by 8% from the year before. Highlights of the Ohio County 4-H program range from the success of the 4-H camping programs to the Awards Celebration where members, volunteers, and clubs were recognized for their outstanding achievements. In addition to the overall program highlights, the achievement of one Ohio County 4-H member exemplifies the individual growth and opportunities provided by 4-H. Becca Franklin represented the State of West Virginia at the 2015 National 4-H Conference, the premier civic engagement opportunity for 4-H members in the United States. Becca served as one of four delegates from West Virginia.

The Agriculture and Natural Resources program continues to be a go-to source of information answering questions from nearly 800 individuals on issues including: Gas & Oil, Gardening, Forestry, Farming, and Water.

The Family Nutrition Program- Youth initiative was reestablished in Ohio County when Youth Health Educator Carol Morgan started with the Extension Service in August. Carol provided a total of 98 lessons to students in the 3rd through 5th grades at Elm Grove, Madison, and Middle Creek elementaries. In the fall semester, 301 youth were engaged in the Family Nutrition Program.

4-H and Youth Development

As the largest youth-development organization in the world, 4-H strives to empower youth to reach their full potential by working and learning in partnership with caring adults. 4-H provides an effective network of programs that engage youth in education related to citizenship, science, and healthy living while promoting the four-fold development of each member’s head, heart, hands, and health.

Research conducted by the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University shows that youth engaged in 4-H programs excel beyond their peers.

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4-H youth are:

Four times more likely to contribute to their communities

Twice as likely to be civically active

Twice as likely to make healthier choices

Twice as likely to participate in Science, Engineering, and Computer Technology programs during out-of-school time.

Ohio County 4-H encourages youth to “learn by doing” through a network of community clubs, special interest clubs, camps, and school-based activities. Ohio County 4-H programs are conducted by Extension Service faculty and 4-H volunteers with support from the Ohio County 4-H Leaders’ Association, the Ohio County 4-H Foundation, the Ohio County 4-H All Stars, and the Ohio County Community Educational Outreach Service.

Increased success in STEM and other academic subjects leads to positive outcomes for youths as well as a reduction in risky behaviors. Because of their involvement in 4-H activities in Ohio County, youth are more likely to obtain well-paying jobs, create their own businesses, and contribute to the health and well-being of their communities.

Through Ohio County’s 5 community clubs and three special interest clubs:

- 137 youth joined a 4-H club and experienced an organizational business meeting.
- 44 youth joined 4-H as cloverbud members (ages 5-8).
- 516 hours of community service were performed by 125 4-H members.
- 126 youth engaged in learning through 4-H project curriculum.
- 101 project exhibits were displayed at the Ohio County Country Fair.
- 80 projects scored blue ribbons.
- 60 youth participated in the Health Rocks! program at the Ohio County 4-H Overnighter.
- 34 participated in state 4-H camping programs.
- 21 Ohio County 4-H members participated in state level competitions for individuals and teams. Team competitions include the State 4-H Air Rifle Competition and the State First Lego League Robotics Competition. One individual competition resulted in Veda Wheeler earning first place in the State Visual Presentation Contest in the Leisure/Recreation category. Another resulted in Becca Franklin representing West Virginia at National 4-H Conference.

Through Ohio County’s 1 residential camp and 2 day camps:

- 174 youth participated in at least one 4-H camping program.
- Over 2,300 nutritious meals were served to youth participating in Ohio County 4-H camps..

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- 812 of the meals were in partnership with the Summer Food Program.
- 131 youth participated in the residential Ohio County 4-H Camp.
- 22 youth participated in the Ohio County 4-H Cloverbud Day Camp.
- 35 youth engaged in science and health lessons at Ohio County 4-H CloverSTEM Day Camp.
- County and state camp evaluations show that youth gain valuable life skills through residential 4-H camps.
 - Youth develop leadership skills.
 - Youth develop lasting friendships.
 - Youth learn to make group decisions.
 - Youth learn to accept others that are different than themselves.
- 4-H CloverSTEM Day Camp evaluation results indicate that as a result of camp:
 - 96.6% of youth get excited about new discoveries.
 - 93.8% of youth want to learn more about science.
 - 93.3% of youth will do science activities that are not for school.
 - 70% of youth would like to have a job related to science.

Through school programs:

- 55 youth were taught sun safety at the Bridge Street Middle School Health and Wellness Conference.
- 100 youth were taught about their personal money habits and attitudes at the Triadelphia Middle School Health and Wellness Conference.
- 54 youth were taught about latitude, longitude, and GPS technology at Elm Grove Elementary.

Through the network of local organizations that support Ohio County 4-H:

- Over \$9,500 were raised to support Ohio County 4-H through fundraisers, grants, and donations.
- Over \$5,800 in scholarships were awarded to 4-H members to help them attend county, state and national 4-H events.
- Over 100 adult volunteers donated an estimated 5,850 hours to support and assist with club and county 4-H events.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

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As Ohio County producers compete in local food markets, more of the food dollar stays in the county or in West Virginia. In addition, buying local, fresh produce has benefits related to healthy eating and nutrition. Keeping farms viable helps maintain the long-term growth of the local foods movement that has received statewide and even national publicity.

Many Ohio County farmers are in the beef cattle industry. This industry faces challenges that include, but are not limited to, increasing competition from other meats, product variability, and rising costs associated with production. WVU Extension efforts in Ohio County to promote marketing pools and analyze cattle through the Livestock Administrator database increases production and sale of cattle this county and in the state, thus improving the county's economy from agriculture.

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

If vegetable growers are able to prevent diseases in their produce, they can increase yield of cucurbits, tomatoes, potatoes, and other produce in the county. Increased revenues improve the incomes of growers and the West Virginia economy grows through higher taxes. Additional health benefits are also accrued as citizens eat more fruits and vegetables that are grown locally. Teaching food production and supporting farmers is essential in creating food security for our region.

By engaging women in farm business planning we reached out to a new audience of entrepreneurs. The ladies who participated in Annie's project and later the Women in Agriculture Conference have learned Risk Management skills to protect their farms and their customers. They also implemented marketing skills and their operations continue to grow and impact the local foods production for the Ohio Valley.

West Virginia, especially the Northern Panhandle, has already begun to reap financial gains from the production of natural gas in the state's Marcellus Shale. In order to continue to provide this natural resource to citizens and benefit from its revenues, it is imperative that we develop and monitor drilling techniques that protect the environment and West Virginia citizens. It is also important to create an informed public so that they may make good decisions for their finances, future land needs and the needs of their communities. Local agents, in conjunction with the Gas and Oil Team, produced two publications this past year. WVU Extension Agent, Karen Cox co-authored a fact sheet on Forced Pooling and Dispute Resolution providing clear, unbiased information on this timely topic. While WVU Extension Agent, Norm Schwertfeger co-authored a fact sheet giving guidance for those interested in finding a career within the Oil and Gas Industry.

Outputs

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- 653 citizens engaged in agriculture and natural resource programs.
- 796 citizens received individualized information in response to an Agriculture or Natural Resource question.
- Over 250 episodes of the Ag Minute aired on 99.5FM and were posted online and 52 episodes of the Farm Show aired on WWVA.
- 72 farmers involved in livestock management and beef quality assurance programs.
- 11 farmers involved in farm management programs (Annie's Project).
- 16 farmers/vendors involved in farmers markets.
- 488 citizens involved in public educational activities such as the Public Garden Lecture Series, Wheeling Garden Symposium, and Natural Gas Education.
- 44 youth involved in youth agriculture education activities such as Tree Identification, and Youth (Livestock) Quality Assurance.
- 61 soil tests were performed for Ohio County residents.
- 58 volunteers were involved in agriculture and natural resource activities.
- \$3,417.50 raised from local sources, including monetary and in-kind donations, for agriculture and natural resource programing.
- \$22,761.20 was earned by 4-H youth selling project animals at the West Alexander County Fair to support youth education in Agriculture.

Participation in specific agriculture and natural resources programs in our county:

- 21 were re-certified for Private Pesticide Applicator's Licensure.
- One farmer participated in WV Quality Assurance Feeder Cattle Marketing program.
- Five attended the Small Farms Conference.
- Eight attended the Women in Agriculture Conference.
- 1,345 volunteer hours were given by 52 active members in Extension Master Gardener Program.
- 72 participated in Beef Quality Assurance educational programs (Management Considerations in Heifer Development, Balage Best Management).

Examples of changes in farmers and agricultural management conditions in the county:

- 11 participants joined in farm management workshops and improved their skills in the business side of agritourism and other small farm operations.

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- One producer from Ohio County participated in the marketing pools and benefited from the analysis of cattle through the Livestock Administer database.
- 40 participants gained knowledge of West Virginia's Forced Pooling laws and how they affect their land and mineral rights.
- 24 participants increased their knowledge and skills on financial impacts from the Marcellus and Utica Shale gas development.
- Four local producers completed Good Agricultural Practices training to improve food safety on their farms

Families and Health

The Family Nutrition Program is comprised of numerous nutrition, food and physical activity projects designed to help limited resource families, youth, and adults improve their health. The program targets risk factors associated with obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic diseases. The Family Nutrition Program consists of two primary initiatives: Youth programs and Adult programs.

- The Family Nutrition Program Youth initiative encourages youth to be more active and to make healthy food choices. This program engages 3rd through 5th grade students in eligible schools. Additional participants are reached through community events and summer camps.
- 301 youth were reached in 2015.
- 90% of youth indicate that being active every day is fun, post-program.
- 10% more youth eat fruit every day.
- 5% of youths in the Family Nutrition Program improved their use of safe food handling practices.
- 73% of youth said they will ask their family to make at least one healthier food available.
- 265 youth and adults engaged in nutrition education at the Ohio County Country Fair.

The Family Nutrition Program Adult initiative teaches adults with limited resources how to safely prepare food, plan healthy meals, read food labels, and to stretch their food budget. Participants are reached through partnerships with community organizations that serve low-income families. Outreach activities at community events, fairs, festivals, etc. are also coordinated to increase the awareness of the Family Nutrition Program.

- Over 75 participants have engaged in a FNP-Adult program.
 - 85% of participants showed an improvement in at least one nutrition practice.

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- 66% of participants showed an improvement in at least one food resource management practice (e.g. planning meals, comparing prices, etc.).
- Over 150 adults have engaged in nutrition education through local partnerships and health fairs.

The Community Education Outreach Service is a network of community-based clubs that strengthen individuals, families, and communities through life-long education, leadership development, and community service.

- 47 members participated through 4 clubs in 2015.
- 4,500 hours of community service were completed by members.
- 4 educational programs were delivered to the public.
 - 32 citizens learned from U.S. Attorney, William J. Ihlenfeld how to protect their identity.
 - 10 citizens learned about the resources available through the West Virginia Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program.
 - 12 adults increased their understanding of how individual children express and wish to receive love, appreciation, and encouragement through the Five Love Languages of Children workshop.
 - 27 citizens learned about the culture, government, and geography of Libya from an international student.
- WVU Extension Agent, Lewis Honaker co-authored a lesson on the history of the glass industry in West Virginia. The lesson “Colorful Reflections: How Glass Molded West Virginia” is part of the 2016 West Virginia CEOS lesson publications.

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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