

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

### Highlights

“Farm to School,” which enriches the connections communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and early care and education settings, was successful.

- 37 local producers sold over \$100,000 to Mason County Schools.

WVDA and Western Soil Conservation District Potato Production Project involved 17 growers with 40 acres of potatoes. Four of those growers are 4-H members.

Nearly 700 4-H members, 4-H Cloverbuds, and FFA members took part in the Mason County Fair in 2015. More than 800 projects were exhibited including 370 livestock projects. The 2015 livestock sale generated nearly \$500,000 dollars, the vast majority of which went directly to the youth exhibitors.

### 4-H and Youth Development

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 Mason County, youth are more likely to obtain well-paying jobs, create their own businesses, and contribute to the health and well of their communities.

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

- 173 youth attended county 4-H camps.
- More than 50 4-Hers attended a state 4-H camp or state activity such as Alpha Camps, Teen Leader Weekend, Dance Weekend or OMC.
- 503 were active members in one of 21 community 4-H club with nearly 200 active volunteers.
- 108 were active members in one of 10 Cloverbud clubs.
- Nearly 100 campers interacted with a STEM Ambassador this summer, which was their first

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encounter with a scientist or engineer. These campers gained an awareness of career possibilities in a STEM field for themselves and their peers.

- Three Livestock Judging teams competed at the West Virginia Stockman's Contest- two teams competed and won 1st place in the Beef Cook- Off and three teams competed at State Livestock Judging in Morgantown.
- More than 900 youth participated in STEM activities through 4-H camp classes and assemblies. Mason County Outdoor Youth Expo activities and experiments were shared in local elementary school classrooms by 4-H Extension Agent, Lorrie Wright.
- Since 2014, volunteers and 4-Hers have worked together and have secured more than \$50,000 towards a new 4-H Camp Dining Hall.
- 498 4-H and FFA members completed the online Livestock Quality Assurance Training which was 100% of youth livestock exhibitors.

## Agriculture and Natural Resources

As Mason 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.

- More than 200 soil tests, involving at least 3,000 acres were performed.
- 27 pesticide applicators were recertified.
- Agricultural Agent, Rodney Wallbrown, was coordinator and leader of the Souther Bull and Replacement Heifer Test Program.
- Agricultural Agent, Rodney Wallbrown pursued research on the *Effects of On-Farm Management Practices on Round Bale Silage Fermentation*, receiving National recognition.

## Community, Economic and Workforce Development

While Mason County does not have a CEWD agent, we are still able to contribute toward the improved economic situation of the county.

- The purpose of the Community Educational Outreach Service is education. Their mission is to strengthen individuals and families through Continuing Education, Leadership Development, and Community Service. According to Independensector.org, the 2015 value of a volunteer hour was \$23.07 per hour. Mason County CEOS has nearly 100 members. Those members contributed approximately 500 hours to the county, which equals over \$10,000 of unpaid work provided by these members.

## Families and Health

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West Virginia adults and children were encouraged to “Rethink Your Drink” through community demonstrations and 4-H camp activities throughout the year.

- Approximately 500 youth and adults were introduced to healthier drink options and encouraged to skip sodas and sugary beverages.
- 100 members in five different CEOS clubs.
- The Mason County CEOS continues to promote Breast Cancer awareness by sponsoring “Walk for Women”. In 2015 they raised nearly \$2,000 for the West Virginia Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Fund which directly benefits women in Mason County who are uninsured and underinsured.

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