

# EXTENSION Today

## IN BREATHITT COUNTY

*In Breathitt County we're growing ideas that make a difference in your life, your family, and your community. We have a dedicated staff of trained professionals delivering educational programs in agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, and community and economic development. The Breathitt County Cooperative Extension Office is your connection to the University of Kentucky and the world.*

*You'll see some key numbers in this report. But the numbers don't show you the people or the impact of our work. So the rest of this report shows the faces behind some of the numbers.*



### Nutrition and Education Program

The nutritional quality of the American diet continues to decrease, along with the number of people with adequate food preparation skills. Poor nutrition leads to many health problems, including obesity and increases in diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers. Breathitt County ranks in the worst category in the nation in many of these diet-related diseases. As home meal preparation continues to decline, and fast food consumption rises, these problems will compound. Basic food preparation skills are essential to make improvements in nutritional quality. A challenge is to make learning these skills more interesting.

While many conventional food and nutrition classes continue in our county (997 people attended one of 36 classes on food and nutrition through Lunch and Learn Homemaker groups, canning workshops, afterschool projects, etc.), basic food preparation, food safety, and nutrition were also taught through some less conventional methods. Over 1200 people attended an exhibit, class, or hands on experience that taught these skills through heritage cookery, emergency food preparation, and a vast array of outdoor cooking methods. Emergency food preparation focused on safe ways to prepare foods when the power is out, and identified potentially deadly hazards if the wrong equipment was used indoors. Heritage cookery gave

youth and adults alike a taste of Kentucky's rich food heritage while developing a renewed appreciation for the food preparation conveniences of today. Outdoor cooking classes used methods that ranged from a tin can stove and cardboard box oven all the way to ultra high tech butane stoves to teach fundamental food preparation skills. 175 people demonstrated competence in food preparation through less conventional means, using charcoal, wood fires, propane stoves, butane stoves, and a buddy burner (paraffin and cardboard burner.) 52 youth demonstrated the proper use of a thermometer in food preparation. 70 people had hands on experience in other food safety skills.

### Reaching Out to Breathitt County



<i>Educational Programs</i>	
Programs presented	469
Total participants	20,000
<i>Educational Contacts</i>	
Clientele visits	557
Telephone consultations	1588
Newsletters distributed	3672
<i>Volunteer Development</i>	
Volunteers	171
Volunteer hours	1350+
Clientele reached by volunteers	

## Home Fruit and Vegetable Production



Home fruit and vegetable production has been identified as a way for Breathitt County residents to save money on their food bill and provide fresh nutritious food for their families. Several

programs and demonstrations were provided to teach recommended practices in home vegetable gardening and fruit production. Thirty senior citizens learned about growing vegetables in containers and controlling disease and insects at a garden meeting. A twilight garden tour was held at the Robinson Station in cooperation with UK Horticulture Specialist, Dr. Terry Jones. The twenty-two participants saw firsthand, cultural practices and recommendations in vegetable disease and insect control, irrigation and variety selection.

A fruit tree grafting demonstration was held where proper grafting techniques were demonstrated. Fruit tree pruning techniques, fertilizing and disease and insect control were also discussed. Fifty people attended the demonstration. A group order of semi-dwarf rootstock was taken for Breathitt County and eighteen other counties. A total of fifty-four hundred were ordered. Producers saved at least ten dollars per tree by grafting their own for a total savings of four thousand dollars in Breathitt County and fifty thousand in the other eighteen counties.

## Increasing Self Esteem

Many of the youth in our county are at risk economically, which also makes them more at risk for low self-esteem and poor health. The Breathitt County Extension Agent for FCS worked with local schools and family resource centers to provide an educational session about personal hygiene and grooming habits for good health. Following the educational session, the family resource centers provided each student with a personal care kit that included soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, and antiperspirant.



178 students attended one of 7 classroom

presentations on personal hygiene targeted toward 4th - 6th grade students. The students learned about the physical changes that all youth go through as they begin to mature, and about good grooming habits that are increasingly important through these years. Body odor and acne were primary topics, since these are topics that many students are embarrassed to ask for help with, as well as ones that students may not be aware of the causes of the problem or ways to deal with them. An educational session held later with many of the same classrooms was attended by 141 students in 6 classrooms. This session focused on good manners in general and good table manners in particular. A school field trip gave many of these students an opportunity to dine aboard the Kentucky Dinner Train, which was the very first formal dining experience many of them had ever had.

School personnel reported that they had observed an improvement in self-esteem in many of the students after the educational experiences and the field trip. The students used the table manners they had practiced in the classroom in a real life setting. The students were able to identify several life situations where knowing good manners might give them an advantage, such as at job interviews, scholarship interviews, or interpersonal relationships. One school employee reported that a member of the Dinner Train staff had made a special effort to complement the students on their behavior and good manners.

## Breathitt County's First 4-H Country Ham Project

Curing hams was once a common practice in Eastern Kentucky, but now is almost a lost art. Not many people cure their own hams in our county and some youth don't know exactly what a "country" ham is. With the lack of participation on the state level from Eastern Kentucky counties, Breathitt County was targeted to help build interest in our region for the Country Ham Project. This year the Breathitt County 4-H Council sponsored its first country ham project. Six youth from Breathitt County took advantage of the sponsorship and are in the process of curing their hams. Youth traveled to the University of Kentucky Meat Science Lab where they learned how to salt their hams and put them in ham socks for the cure. Hams were then transported to the

Clark County Extension Office's ham house, where they were hung for the curing process. In May, the youth, 4-H Agent, and an adult leader traveled back to Clark County to clean the hams and re-sock them and put them back in the ham house for the aging process. The 4-H Country Ham project is more than just learning how to cure a ham. In August, the youth will exhibit their hams at the Kentucky State Fair where they will also give a speech which is 60% of their total score. The volunteer working with the youth had asked them to be researching their topics and has been working with them on their speeches.

In the meantime, the 4-H Agent has secured a grant totaling \$1800 to continue the country ham project in Breathitt County. Twelve hundred dollars of that money will go to build a permanent ham house in the county so more youth can participate without having to drive to other counties. The remainder of the money will be spent to buy supplies for the program as well as startup costs for the next year. The 4-H Council will be working on a committee to make this program self sustaining with fundraiser that is yet to be determined. Some ideas have been a country ham breakfast, or a country ham auction. Whatever the case may be, the youth involved have learned a great deal during this project and seem eager to participate again. Next year, with the addition of the ham house and supplies being close to home, the council hopes to increase its number of participants to at least 15. With the interest generated from the articles in the paper, there should be no problem doing so.



**Hannah and Ty salting hams!**

## **Master Tree Farmer Program**

As a part of ongoing programming in Forest Management in Breathitt County, the Breathitt County Extension Service participated in the 2009 Master Tree Farmer webinar series. The program was targeted at Kentucky's private woodland owners. Seven landowners from Breathitt County attended the three sessions at the Breathitt County Extension Office.

A post test was administered to determine short term impacts; participants were asked to rate their knowledge before and after the programs. Knowledge gained as a result of the programs range from 48% on global climate change to 71% on planning for success through managing woodlands. Ninety-eight per cent-100% indicated they will use the information to manage their property.

The long-term impacts from this program include increased revenue, improved woodland productivity, improved wildlife habitat and improved woodland health. Another long-term impact will result in participants' enhanced ability to address woodland risks, resulting in: increased revenue from timber sales for those using a professional forester, increased woodland productivity and improved woodland health.



**Breathitt County Master Tree Farmers**

## **4-H Chick Incubation Project**

Seeing the need to connect science, agriculture and everyday life, the Breathitt County CES 4-H Program offered the Chicken Incubation Project this year to local schools. One classroom immediately responded and wanted the project in her room. 4-H provided the incubator, fertilized eggs, curriculum, and materials to care for birds after hatching to the classrooms. The 4-H Agent delivered the eggs, incubator, curriculum and brood box to the room and discussed the process of

incubation and embryology with the kids and the teacher. During the next three weeks, the 4-H Agent was in contact with the teacher to make sure everything was going well with the project. The whole school got involved and many classrooms would bring their students by to take a look at the eggs.

The teacher reported that her students had learned many useful facts about embryology as well as responsibility in caring for the eggs, incubator and the baby chicks that were hatched.

In total 25 youth were reached directly this year and at least 2 more classrooms have already made arrangements to do the project in the upcoming year. Also as a result of the chick incubation project, one parent has purchased his own incubator and is currently incubating his own eggs with his sons. The CES has provided him with guidance and material for him to use on numerous occasions and is looking forward to his first hatch. Chick incubation has proven to be a valuable tool in the classroom as well as an inexpensive, fun project to bring families together.

### **Environment and Tourism**

The Breathitt County Extension Natural Resources Committee has worked the last few years to increase tourism by promotion of recreation and use of the many streams and rivers in Breathitt County. Last year a canoe trip was held with eighty people participating. During the canoe trip short programs were held along the way where UK Forester, Doug McLaren and Amanda Gumbert, UK Water Specialist presented information on water quality and environmental issues. The local solid waste officer also presented information on the county wide clean-up and littering.

A river sweep was held prior to the canoe trip by the Extension Natural Resources Committee. Participants on the canoe trip commented on how much cleaner the river is as compared to a few years ago. The canoes that were purchased by the Extension Natural Resources Committee and presented to the city park are being used more according to the park manager.

## **Thank You!**

We at the Breathitt County Extension Office would like to take time to say “Thank You” to our clients, leaders, and volunteers for another great year in Extension! We appreciate all of your efforts throughout the year. We look forward to the great things that we can accomplish together in the upcoming year! Thank You!

### **The Breathitt County Cooperative Extension Service**

*We deliver information, education, solutions.*

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