

EXTENSION Today



IN MCCRACKEN COUNTY

In McCracken 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, horticulture, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, and community and economic development. The McCracken 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.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Ag Day

McCracken County Extension agents in cooperation with the McCracken County Board of Education conducted an educational Ag Day for county and city third graders. Also collaborating and presenting were Kentucky Department of Agriculture, KY Division of Forestry, KY Environmental Protection Agency, Kentucky Farm Bureau, community groups, Purchase Area Master Gardeners, and county FFA students.

Professional and volunteers presented programs on farm equipment, live animals, dairy, soybeans, corn, cotton and other educational efforts. Educators in McCracken County have an agriculture component



in third grade, which is relevant to all educational presentations. After returning to class, students could discuss their hands on experiences of Ag Day.

A total of 997 youth and adults attended this educational effort. 100% of teachers surveyed replied that this activity was the most important and informational field trip the children experienced during the year.

Reaching Out to McCracken County



Educational Programs

Programs presented	12,650
Total participants	38,200

Educational Contacts

Clientele visits	776
Telephone consultations	15,900
Newsletters distributed	62,850

Volunteer Development

Volunteers	750
Volunteer hours	21,275
Clientele reached by volunteers	34,000

Teachers reported that children were able to identify different farm equipment, beef and dairy cows, as well as differences between goats and sheep. As an added bonus the children made colorful bookmarks from cotton paper which were later donated to residents of assisted living-facilities.

Horticulture Education Improved by Master Gardener Volunteers

The Purchase Area Master Gardeners Association (PAMGA) maintain, improve and fund the University of KY Demo Garden on Coleman Road for the purpose of horticulture education. Demo Garden events are open to the public and included Weed Identification and Pest Facts Clinics.



Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating. Disabilities accommodated with prior notification.

Hands-on horticulture education for individuals from the McCracken County Halfway-House was offered on a weekly basis in the growing season.

The Horticulture program along with PAMGA volunteers who funded/created 2011 Calendar of KY Native Plants which also indicated monthly Toolbox programs. 2500 calendars were given free to the public. Volunteers worked for Hort Hotline biweekly during the growing season and Paducah Renaissance Alliance's Farmers Market each 3rd Saturday.

Partnered with PAMGA, UK specialists, and Murray State University to improve horticulture education through the Master Gardener Program. As a result of a Master Gardener class 16 new interns were trained



in Fall 2010. Of the class, 100% of participants passed the final exam, adding 16 new Master Gardeners to the 30 others already certified.

According to Independent Sector, a non-profit leadership organization, the hourly wage for a volunteer hour is estimated at \$20.85 per hour. Master Gardener volunteers contributed 1955 hours in 2010 and 477 hours the first half of 2011 for a total of 2432 hours. This translates to a monetary donation of time valued at \$50,707.02 to McCracken County horticulture education.

4-H Youth Development

Internet Safety

Since 2007 the McCracken County Extension Service has made strides to protect youth with an internet safety program. This program has reached youth from kindergarten to seniors in high school with

approximately 1,200 youth being educated on safe practices for social networking sites.

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter have boomed over the past 5 years and with many benefits there are also risks. Research shows that children who behave aggressively at home or at school are twice as likely to be victimized on social media sites. This year the McCracken County Extension Service branched out their internet program and began working with the Attorney General of Kentucky's office to educate youth and adults on 4 key areas:

1. Posting personal information about themselves on the internet (lets strangers know their physical location leading to manipulation or social bullying).
2. Spending more time on the internet than engaging in outside activities which can lead to social problems.
3. Exposure to inappropriate content.
4. Contact with adults posing as teens or young children.

Evaluations showed that 89% of youth in grades 4-8 are using social networking sites. 19% have parents who monitor what they do while the other 81% are unmonitored. 44% have "friends" that they do not know and 46% say that they have had communication that made them uncomfortable. Since 2007, 85% of students who had uncomfortable experiences told their parents after going through the Extension Services internet safety program. 30% also reported that they immediately removed personal information from their user profile.



Attorney General Jack Conway has pledged to create an internet crimes unit that will work with local law enforcement officers to protect children from internet predators and prevent residents from becoming victims of online scams or identity theft.

Robotics

In October of 2010, the McCracken County 4-H council applied for a grant through the JCPenneys Afterschool Program to be designated to start afterschool groups using robotics. McCracken County was awarded \$4,500.00 to develop 4-H robotics clubs within the county in November, and by December 1st Lone Oak High School agreed to start a US First Robotics team, along with commitments from 6 area elementary schools to start a 4-H robotics club (Heath, Concord, Lone Oak, Hendron-Lone Oak, Farley, and Reidland Elementary Schools). The money was to be used to purchase Lego Mindstorms robotics kits along with other resources that include curriculum.

After the training, 5 of the 6 elementary schools started to offer afterschool 4-H robotics clubs on a routine basis, as well as 2 schools offering day and summer camps. Concord Elementary School started Girls in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) club as a result of the training and robots that were made available.

Over 350 McCracken County Schools that are elementary aged students, and 15 youth from Lone Oak High School were directly involved on a routine basis through 4-H clubs and day camps. Of the 365 youth that participated, 88% of the students enjoyed participating in the program, and 83% of the youth agreed to participate next year.

Administration from 3 of the Paducah City Schools (Morgan, McNabb, and Clark Elementary Schools) also asked if McCracken County 4-H would be interested in Starting pilot programs in the city schools. As a result of the pilot program in the city, Clark Elementary School agreed to start an after school 4-H robotics club, with the other 2 schools wishing to add 4-H robotics in their science curriculum for 4th graders.



Expansion of the Backpack Program

McCracken County 4-H was one of the first groups in the Commonwealth of Kentucky to start the backpack weekend feeding program. This program formed as a result of 4-H teens who realized the need for providing non-perishable food items to children in order to supplement their hunger needs over the weekends. These hungry youth are comprised of nine elementary schools.



With tough economic times, there seems to be a larger need in our communities. In 2010, 21.5% of citizens in the city of Paducah, and 13.5% of citizens within McCracken County were below poverty level. This is an increase of nearly 15% over the past decade.

In September of 2010, McCracken County began to increase in donations allowing 4-H to continue the program thanks to a large amount of campaigning and awareness. As a result of this campaign, we received over \$27,000.00 in donations including an endowment of \$2,000.00 per month during each school year by one family. This money allowed McCracken County 4-H to expand the program at each of the elementary schools. The total number of youth being served by the program by December, 1 was 215 youth per week. Along with a higher amount of donations, a community service club wanting to become more involved in 4-H agreed to help supplement their help to fill these “backpack” supplemental meals.

In 2010 an individual donor gave over \$7,500.00 to help the program reach middle school aged youth thus serving an additional 60 backpacks per week. A second service club agreed to start their own 4-H service project by filling all of the middle school backpacks.

As a result of the campaigning effort, McCracken County collected \$35,262.35 for the backpack program in FY 2010-2011. The money donated expanded the program from 150 youth per week in 2009, to over 260 youth per week in 2010.

Family & Consumer Science

Walking and Weight Loss Programs

McCracken County ranks 27th in the state in a comparative assessment of health risk.

The following numbers outlines the health risks for adults in McCracken County:

- 11% diagnosed with diabetes
- 26% report a lack of physical activity
- 17% obesity rate

In an effort to “Get McCracken County Moving” the McCracken County Cooperative Extension Service planned and implemented the “Walk & Talk” program utilizing the “GreenWay Trail” one of Paducah’s Public Parks.

The “Walk & Talk” program was a way for people to have walking partners and walk at their own pace. Participants registered and were provided with a pedometer to begin tracking their daily steps. The “Walk & Talk” program was held for 5 weeks in the fall and for 9 weeks in the

spring. 155 people began on their new walking journey.

•100% of the participants stated that having walking partners was key in their motivation to walk

•98% of the participants had never tracked their steps until this program was offered

•75% are still tracking their steps daily as reported in a 3 month follow up survey

•100% of those still tracking their steps say the pedometer makes them be more active



Thirty-one people enrolled in the eight week Weight the Reality Series Program to get the support, education and accountability needed to get on the road to weight loss and increased activity levels. As another incentive to be successful a weight loss competition was added to the program, 18 of the class members joined in the “Greatest Loser” competition with a weekly weigh in. At the conclusion of the program:

- A total of 97.1 pounds were lost by the group
- Average weight loss of the class was 3.5% of body

The McCracken County Cooperative Extension Service

We deliver information, education, solutions.

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weight

- 93% of the participants had learned behavior change techniques for healthy eating and increasing activity
- 10% of body weight was lost by the “Greatest Loser” competition winner

According to a 3 month follow up “Is it still working” survey:

- 87% of the respondents reported continual monitoring of body weight
- 70% reported continual weight loss following the program
- 65% was able to develop a supportive environment for weight management



Nutrition Education Program

The McCracken County Expanded Foods Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) reaches underserved audiences providing nutrition education that is evidence based. The participants in the program receive hands-on education and gain basic skills necessary to raise healthy families on limited incomes in a struggling economy.

In McCracken County:

- 83 limited resource families were taught how to serve more nutritious meals, to keep foods safe
- 92.9% of families made an improvement in the nutritional quality of their diet.
- 54% of EFNEP graduated families consumed a diet of higher quality
- 42% of families increased the frequency of moderate physical activity for 30 minutes per day.
- 61% of families demonstrated an improvement in safe food handling practices and hand washing behavior.
- 84 % of families learned to plan meals ahead of time and use a grocery list to guide food selections.