

# EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

## *Changing Lives*

### IN MASON COUNTY

Extension provides practical education you can trust by helping individuals, families, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.



*Organic High Tunnel Field Day*

The Mason County Cooperative Extension Service continues its mission to bring research based information from both of the land grant institutions (University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University) in the state to local individuals and families. It is apparent that Cooperative Extension continues to make strides in serving a diverse group of clientele.

While we continue to meet the needs of rural populations, we also host numerous programs in the areas of agriculture and natural resources, horticulture, family and consumer sciences, 4-H and youth development, and economic development.

We hope that you will take a moment to review the programs from 2017 and 2018 highlighted in this report. We are looking forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming programs soon!

### Program Efforts

- **15** Number of producers who now practice efficient reproduction techniques
- **10** Number of master gardeners that have completed certification and were active volunteers in the county during the past year
- **6,550** Numbers of hours KEHA members volunteered in community service
- **275** Number of youth provided with diversity focused education
- **150** Number of youth who indicate they listen to people who have different ideas
- **156** Number of individuals who made lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- **60** Number of those indicating an increased awareness of sustainable agriculture practices
- **55** Number of producers who plan to complete the Kentucky Pesticide Applicator Training
- **309** Number of students that completed Truth and Consequences: The Choice Is Yours Program
- **208** Number of youth who understands the role of agriculture in the production of food and fiber

## **Agriculture & Natural Resources**

### **Agent: Matthew “Tad” Campbell**

In addition to educational programming, we offer diagnostic testing, soil analysis, hay testing, plant/insect I.D. and many other services. Over the last year over 360 soil test analyzations were completed plus over 55 diagnostic tests for disease problems and plant/insect I.D.

Mason County ANR is participating in the Beef Integrated Reproductive Management (IRM) Program sponsored by the University of Kentucky Beef Specialist Team. The program is to work with local producers to increase management of beef herds from a reproductive initiative. The major focus is to narrow calving windows and group weaned calves to have a more consistent group at sale time. Tools used to help achieve the desired results are estrous synchronization, introduction to artificial insemination, herd health protocols, and weighing calves at time of weaning. Through efforts with the program producers in general have seen tighter calving windows, increased genetic diversity with artificial insemination and utilizing weaning weights as a vital tool for operations.

With the Buffalo Trace counties representing a large portion of rural area, forage production plays a vital role for agriculture across the five counties. With one of the largest alfalfa producing counties in the state along with high ranking grass hay production, offering a program to focus on improving forage quality would benefit local producers and agriculture operations in the Buffalo Trace Counties. The area Agriculture and Natural Resources Agents worked with specialist, agents, and local producers to develop and implement a program to offer education on improved forage quality and stored feed sources. Thirty area producers registered for the six session program that covered forage topics of Soil Fertility, Machinery, Cool/Warm Season Grasses, Storing Forages, Weed Control, and Marketing. Those registrants represent 10,369 acres across the area with a total of 5,412

acres of forages for focused improvements. The group has had positive comments about the educational program and will be completing a survey to see planned improvements for their operations. With only 30% of the participants using weed control methods for hay production, improvements are possible with discussions from those in attendance. The program offered many facets to those that utilize hay as part of their livestock operation as well as those that produce forages for cash sales for other livestock operations.



*ANR Agent, Tad Campbell, demonstrating new pasture weaning methods.*

## **Family & Consumer Sciences**

### **Agent: Heather Cheek**

Mason County FCS partnered with the University of Kentucky Nutrition Education Program to bring Super Star Chef to Mason County. This program is a 3-Day Cooking Camp for ages 9-18.

The post-test included eight (8) self-assessment of learning outcomes. These items asked the participants to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that they learned the concepts described in each statement. All the respondents (100%)

agreed/strongly agreed that they learned how to wash their hands to remove germs; learned about the amount of fruits and vegetables they should have on their plates; learned the correct way to hold a knife for cutting; learned how to read recipes; and learned how germs can be transferred to food. Also, all the participants (100%) plan to eat more fruits and vegetables after participating in the program.

According to the CDC, around 49.7% and 43.2% of adolescents in Kentucky report consuming fruits and vegetables, respectively, less than one time a day. In an effort to increase the fruit and vegetable intake of children in Mason County in hopes of decreasing the obesity rates, Mason County FCS partnered with the entire 2nd grade at Charles Straub Elementary School to offer a program called, Food Explorers.

Food Explorers took place every other week over a course of 20 weeks. Every time we visited the school, we would take a different fruit or vegetable to be sampled. In some cases such as a spinach, chickpeas, or spaghetti squash, a recipe was made so that the students could see the different ways fruits and vegetables can be prepared. The foods that were sampled included broccoli salad (broccoli), spinach dip (spinach), hummus (chickpeas), raspberries, bell peppers, spaghetti squash (cooked with marinara sauce), okra (roasted using the Plate It Up! Kentucky Proud recipe), kiwi, mangoes, and pomegranates. The rules behind getting the students to taste it were simple – you don't have to like it, you just have to try it. An incentive was offered to the students who tried every food that was offered. An ice cream party was rewarded to the majority of the students, and we spoke about how sweets are okay in moderation. Each classroom received a chart to hang up that listed every child's name and pictures of the fruits and vegetables. After sampling, students placed a red star if they didn't like it or a gold star if they did next to their name and below that food item.

As a result, 201 out of 212 (95%) tried 10 out

of 10 fruits and vegetables that were sampled during Food Explorers. 49 out of 212 (23%) liked 10 out of 10 fruits and vegetables that were sampled during Food Explorers. 185 out of 212 (87%) liked at least 5 out of 10 fruits and vegetables that were sampled during Food Explorers. 211 out of 212 (99.5%) tried at least 1 new food during Food Explorers. The teachers loved the program and told the parents about it during parent teacher conferences. Each teacher requested that the program continue on next year. Some of the comments from the students included, "I didn't think I would like that because it was green, but it was yummy!" and "I asked my mom to get me hummus to put in my lunch for school." A parent even approached me at a separate event and asked if I was the reason her child asked for spaghetti squash at the grocery store and that she had never bought it before because she thought she wouldn't like it, but now they eat it all the time.

### **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program**

**Assistant: Anita Boyd**

Using the Healthy Choices for Every Body curriculum, the Mason County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) assistant taught inmates at the Mason County Detention Center ways to improve life skills related to food, nutrition and health for themselves and their families.

After completing the Healthy Choices for Every Body curriculum, the following positive behavior changes occurred in food safety techniques: 100% would not thaw frozen food at room temperature, 50% improved on cleaning items and surfaces more often after working with raw meat or seafood, and 67% improved on comparing food prices, planning meals, and checking their cupboard before grocery shopping.

### **Horticulture**

**Agent: Lorin "Macy" Fawns**

Container Gardening and Health Eating is a

program in partnership with the Horticulture agent and Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program assistant. The six-part series started in 2017 and was offered again in 2018. The 28 participants were from limited resource households, received SNAP benefits, and assistance from the housing authority. Participants learned about peas, cucumbers, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, and zucchini. Many of the participants had never attended a class offered by the Extension Service. As a result of this series, participants requested classes on preservation to make their produce last longer. The program will now be offered annually in low-income neighborhoods as a result from the positive feedback.

Growing organic or natural produce can be very difficult especially when insects and disease attack. Several farmers in Mason County expressed interest in learning how to grow vegetables using organic methods in high tunnels. The Horticulture agent contacted the University of Kentucky's South Farm to set-up a time for local farmers to tour the high tunnels, then asked specialists to speak on disease, beneficial insects, and general high tunnel management. The small tour turned into a field day open for anyone. Over 25 producers across the state attended the field day. Comments from the trip included "I learned so much," "Because of this field day, I plan to purchase beneficial insects for my high tunnel," and "this was a great program." The specialists were also happy with the amount of people who participated. We plan to have another organic high tunnel field trip in the near future.

#### **4-H & Youth Development**

**Agent: Mary Jane Little**

Mason County 4-H and EFNEP has hosted multiple Healthy Cupcake Wars competitions over the last year. Youth competed in baking from-scratch healthy cupcakes to present to judges to win the grand prize and bragging rights to the season's edition of Healthy Cupcake Wars. The healthy cupcakes consisted of replacing ingredients like oil for

apple sauce, using zucchini/potatoes/fruit and low-fat options. There were three rounds where teams would be scored on presentation, taste, safety, and technique. No teams were eliminated and the winner was determined by the team who had the highest total score from the combined second and third rounds.

100% of teams improved from round one to round two and 100% of the participants used judges' comments from round one to implement for round two. 37% of the participants had never made cupcakes from scratch. 100% of youth verbally agreed they learned something new, and plan on continuing baking healthy cupcakes at home. Youth learned not only baking skills during this event, but also had to work under pressure as it is a timed event, and work as a team to reach a shared goal. Participants also made decisions as a team and had to communicate to accomplish the task.

*"Extension has something to offer for everyone. Whether you're young or old; male or female; married or single; Extension has something for you."*

*- Ann Porter, Mason County Extension Homemaker Association President*



**University of Kentucky**  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
Cooperative Extension Service  
Mason County

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