



ASHTABULA County

WESTERN RESERVE EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- In 2013, 1,506 Ashtabula County producers and landowners participated in 27 production **agriculture and natural resources programs**. These programs were held on a variety of management issues including regulations for local food operations, pesticide recertification, soybean and corn management, farm succession, taxes and woodland management.
- Seven **enhancing local food production programs** were held for 323 participants in 2013. Participants learned how to overcome the obstacles of producing and marketing local foods in Northeast Ohio. Session topics included marketing to schools and restaurants, good agricultural production practices, food safety regulations and developing local food policy councils. As a result, a new locavore list is being created for the county.
- Fifty Ashtabula County farmers who hold a private pesticide applicator license attended **Pesticide Applicator Recertification**. All of the attendees reported that they have improved practices to protect the environment and have improved pesticide handling practices. Attendees also reported that they were better informed about compliance with pesticide and environmental regulations.
- OSU Extension conducted **on-farm research** on corn, soybeans and miscanthus production to benefit Ashtabula County farmers. For the fourth year, Ashtabula County Extension was part of a statewide monitoring program for the western bean cutworm, with 179 adults moths detected. A soybean production study was also conducted

in cooperation with Gale Farms in Cherry Valley, and a miscanthus (bioenergy crop) research plot was maintained at the OARDC Ashtabula Research Station in Kingsville.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- In 2013, the **Ashtabula County 4-H Youth Development Program** had 51 chartered clubs with 900 members guided by 150 adult volunteers. These youth successfully participated in 1,283 projects across the 4-H program. Additionally, 21 new volunteers were screened and trained to work with the Ashtabula County 4-H program. Ninety-five percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed the information presented will help them in working as a 4-H volunteer.
- One hundred eighty-nine youth participated in **Ashtabula County 4-H Camp**. In 2013, 30 teenagers participated in the intensive 4-H Camp Counselor Training Program and then served as counselors during the Ashtabula County 4-H Camp Week held in June at 4-H Camp Whitewood in Windsor, Ohio.
- As a result of a grant received from the Ohio 4-H Foundation, Ashtabula County 4-H was able to continue to offer **science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) curriculum**. Ten new NXT LEGO Mindstorms Robotics kits were purchased and combined with the kits previously on hand. This program can now be offered to an entire school classroom at one time. Using this new technology, 4-H Club youth are also working to explore robotics as part of their 4-H project work. Additionally, the first Robotics 4-H Club was formed in 2013.

- The **Ashtabula County Junior Fair** continues to be a vehicle for youth to learn leadership, social responsibility and service. In 2013, 20 Junior Fair Board members guided by volunteer advisors took on even greater responsibilities and tasks including the development of the Super Skillathon Challenge. Members reported they were able to “develop their public speaking skills” and take more of a “leadership role in the planning of Junior Fair activities.” In addition, OSU Extension offered **Quality Assurance Training** to 363 youth who exhibited a market or lactating animal at the fair. These sessions taught the proper and ethical ways to raise a market animal.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Ashtabula County’s **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)**, which targets SNAP-eligible recipients, presented 102 direct programs reaching 744 adult participants. In these programs, participants were encouraged to make healthy food choices, practice food safety techniques and manage their food budgets. Ninety-six percent of participants reported learning new information, and 85% of participants reported that they plan to make a positive change in their behaviors. We reached 261 participants through indirect programming. This year, Ashtabula County participated in a youth test program at Ridgeview Elementary School. Our county also participated in the Summer Food Service Program. We reached 387 area youth through these programs.
- With support from the Ohio 4-H Foundation and Ashtabula County Farm Bureau, OSU Extension hosted an **Ag Awareness Day** on May 10 at the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds. Every first grader in the county (almost 1,200) attended a countywide Ag Day where they learned about agriculture while meeting life science standards for their school curriculum. More than 150 volunteers were on hand for the day, making the day a success. One student commented, “The day was epic.”
- What makes your garden grow? **Master Gardener Volunteers**, trained by OSU Extension, shared research-based information with gardeners through workshops, community gardens and one-on-one consultations. In total, the 40 Master Gardeners volunteered over 3,000 hours (with a value of \$70,875), reaching over 1,098 residents.
- Ashtabula County’s **school enrichment program** kept in full swing with activities in all seven school districts. Programs included team building, rocketry, chick embryology and agricultural awareness. Over 650 students participated in other various enrichment programs. “Science comes alive and is more enjoyable for the students when there are

hands on activities,” commented one teacher whose class participated in Rockets Away!

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- OSU Extension’s **Real Money, Real World** program is helping to give middle and high school students an understanding of how current income and life choices affect future income. Participants learn how much to expect to pay for housing, transportation and childcare, and how to balance wants versus needs. This hands-on program was offered to 1,501 students. Teachers involved in this program reported a positive difference in students’ study habits. As a result of their participation, one of the students commented, “I can’t believe how much it costs to raise a child. I’m going to need a good job.”
- OSU Extension in cooperation with local economic development organizations conducted a **survey to analyze trends in regional milk production**. Forty-three percent of the local dairy farms responded to this survey. Almost 35% plan on increasing their herd size, adding an additional 818 cows in the region. The survey also identified barriers that included land available to grow crops (60.8%), inadequate labor or unavailable labor (31.4%) and access to financing (29.4%).

Ashtabula County receives \$28,398 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension’s local-state-federal partnership.