

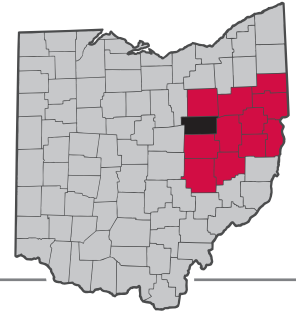


HOLMES County

CROSSROADS EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- **Agricultural production** remains a significant source of income in Holmes County. More than 90% of the county's farms remain under family control with an average size of 119 acres with 187,658 acres in farm production. The latest population census indicates that the Amish make up 50% of the county's population. In 2012, 20,200 acres of corn, 12,200 acres of soybeans, 1,330 acres of wheat, 13,000 acres of hay and 487 acres of vegetables were harvested. Holmes County has 17,000 milk cows and 53,000 all cattle/calves, making it the third highest in the state for both categories. Slightly more than half of all farmland is used for crops. Holmes remains as one of the top ten agriculture receipts in production value in Ohio.
- Satellite technology was used to offer a series of eight **production and management workshops**. Four were focused on beef production and management topics and aimed at local beef cattle producers, and four were focused on sheep and goat management topics and aimed at local sheep and goat producers in the county.
- A collaborative effort between OSU Extension, Holmes County Soil and Water and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources was used to manage the thousands of ponds in the county. A **pond clinic**, hosted by a local Amish family, was attended by more than 45 people. These participants learned new information about pond weed control, fish stocking, nuisance animal control and pond safety equipment used in rescues. Pond Safety Kits were made by the educator and advertised throughout the county media

outlets. This resulted in 56 kits being installed at ponds that previously had no safety equipment.

- **Pesticide Applicator Training (PAT)** was offered to 280 farm managers to provide them with information related to crop production and controlling weed, insect and disease pests. Participants also were updated on the increased number of invasive pests in Ohio's forests. Exit surveys indicated that the managers had made multiple changes to their operating practices due to the trainings offered.
- **Maple syrup production programming**, designed to help maple syrup producers make the highest quality product, took place through 18 workshops. One was held in Holmes County, six were held elsewhere in Ohio and the remaining 11 were held out of state or at international meetings; combined, they reached a total of 676 maple syrup producers. With the growing demand in locally grown foods, this programming helped producers meet the demand for local products. Ohio ranks fourth nationally in maple syrup production.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- More than 60 participants attended **Successful Co-Parenting**, a program for divorcing/separating parents of minor children. Ninety-eight percent of participants said they feel more prepared to co-parent as a result of this program. When asked what they will do differently now, comments included, "make sure I am flexible enough and don't add any more stress to my son" and "be more reassuring to the children and let them speak freely." The most rewarding comment was, "I didn't want to come here tonight. Now I

see so many bad choices and actually see how this class is needed because as adults we should realize what we do, but often we are too angry to see.”

- OSU Extension provides support to those involved in home processing of food by answering consumer calls, conducting **home food preservation workshops and pressure canner testing**. These are great opportunities to talk about the steps needed to ensure the safety of home food preservation. Seven pressure canner testing events and many one-on-one in-office tests were conducted for more than 220 canner units. Almost 85% of those tested needed new parts or needed to have adjustments made during the processing procedure. Eleven food preservation workshops were held, including two multi-part series.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- Holmes County had 30 **4-H Community Clubs** with 504 club members enrolled in over 900 projects in 2013. One hundred ninety-five adult advisors and committee members volunteered to provide leadership to these members. The value of the volunteer service these volunteers bring to Holmes County is nearly \$200,000. Goal setting, leadership and following through on commitments are the life skills that members gain by completing project requirements.
- Providing youth livestock exhibitors with education about the proper care and management of their market animals was the focus of four **Quality Assurance Training** workshops. More than 300 members representing 4-H and FAA clubs across the county attended to build management and evaluation skills by keeping accurate records for fair projects. Helping members understand that the animals they are raising to show will eventually be food on their buyer's table is an important part of this program.

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- The eighth grade classes of both East and West Holmes school districts, assisted by 24 adult volunteers, participated in **Real Money, Real World**. More than 250 students attended the in-class lessons and hands-on simulation in which students must pay for the necessities in life with a pre-determined salary. Participants document learning in a variety of areas related to money and their future. Student comments ranged from, “Where'd all my money go?” to “Do I have to have a car?” to “My kids aren't ever going outside. I can't afford insurance.”
- The nationally recognized **ServSafe Food Handler Program** was offered for the ninth year. In 2013, 16 participants attended the twenty-hour program. Fifteen of

those individuals taking the standardized certification test passed, with an average score of 95%. **Person-in-Charge Training** was attended by 15 Holmes County food service employees. An average 13% increase from pre- to post-test results indicates that this six-hour food safety program impacts how these employees handle the food served to our local residents and visitors. Participants learned about the dangers of foodborne illness; how to prevent cross-contamination and utilize time and temperature control effectively; and discussed cleaning, sanitation and pest management.

Holmes County receives \$17,190 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.