

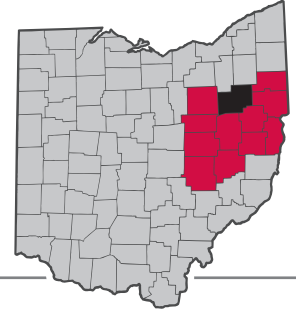


STARK County

CROSSROADS EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- **Pesticide Applicator Training and Recertification**—Stark County Extension provided 37 private applicators with recertification and continuing education. Local participants cited water quality, safety and record keeping as the top three things learned from participating in the program. Additionally, 90% of program evaluations indicated that pesticide practices have improved as a result of the OSU Extension program.
- **Beef School Webinars**—Aimed at educating beef producers and increasing profits, the OSU Extension Beef Team, Stark County OSU Extension and the Stark County Cattleman's Association hosted the Ohio Beef School webinar series for beef producers or those with an interest in beef production. Topics addressed in the sessions included maximizing profit using grazing management and diversification of beef enterprise.
- **Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Education and Certificate Program**—The recently introduced Food Safety and Modernization Act (FSMA) has created a need for many local produce growers to seek unbiased and research-based education and training on practices that will assist them in meeting the requirements of producing food products under this legislation. The OSU Extension Fruit and Vegetable Safety Team partnered with Stark County OSU Extension to offer a GAP Education and Certificate Program. The program offers an overview of food safety related to produce production and strategies to mitigate risk in producer operation from seed to soil to harvest

and transport. Each participant was provided the tools to develop a farm safety and risk management plan.

- **Local Foods**—Extension is working to build awareness, educate and connect all the spokes of local foods. Extension published a Stark County Farmer's Market Directory, with more than 150 copies distributed at the Stark County Fair alone. Extension also partnered with Stark County Educational Services to introduce Farm to School to eight local and city school systems via food service directors.
- **Growing Gardens, Growing Partnerships Program**—Community and backyard vegetable gardening are experiencing a re-birth as the demand for fresh, local produce continues to increase. The Growing Gardens, Growing Partnerships Program provided hands-on educational support for Stark County residents, community gardeners, neighborhoods, organizations and institutions for the third year in a row. A team of Stark County Master Gardener Volunteers organized three community-based gardening programs focused on vegetable production, composting and garden maintenance. The programs reached 57 local participants.
- **Master Gardener Volunteers**—What makes your garden grow? Master Gardener Volunteers, trained by OSU Extension, share research-based information with all types of gardeners through workshops, community gardens and one-on-one consultations. The Master Gardener Volunteers of Stark County provide the Garden Information Line, delivering over 200 hours of service. To date, 29 educational presentations were offered by members of the Speakers' Bureau. Over 300 hours were contributed



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by Master Gardener Volunteers in support of the “Learning Gardens” located on the grounds of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Center and the 7th Street Fairgrounds Garden, an educational venue for 4-H Cloverbud youth. Botanica-Ideas and Inspiration Community Education Symposium, the annual fall symposium, serviced 75 Master Gardener Volunteers and community residents around ideas and inspiration for garden work.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- **4-H Club, 4-H Project Work and 4-H Activities**—More than 1,200 youth experienced hands-on learning in more than 70 4-H Clubs and four 4-H activity groups, participating in over 2,150 projects and activities in all. The 4-H experience also provided a “safe, fun and educational environment.” Life skills, problem solving and decision making techniques were fostered through the guidance of more than 300 dedicated volunteers (giving more than 100,000 volunteer hours) who help prepare our “leaders of tomorrow” to become productive, competent, caring and capable young adults.
- Stark County 4-H presented more than 95 4-H youth members who demonstrated outstanding-level project work and were able to qualify to participate and compete at the 2013 Ohio State Fair in clothing, foods/nutrition, science/technology, outdoor education, leadership, creative arts, dog, horse, poultry, small animal and livestock projects. More than 900 youth completed their 2013 4-H projects, which were evaluated by more than 100 adult volunteer judges.
- **Quality Assurance Training**—More than 750 youth actively completed youth livestock producer Quality Assurance Training. Youth practiced the 10 good production practices. Quality Assurance completion is required for Stark County Junior Fair participation in market and lactating project areas. Quality Assurance Training enables 4-H and FFA youth to participate. It culminates with the 2012 Junior Fair Livestock Auction, which positively provided Stark County with more than \$728,000 of sales. Sales were re-invested locally by Stark County 4-H and FFA youth. All grand champions broke their respective records for sales.
- **4-H Junior Fair Web Team (starkcountyjrfair4h.com)**—This interactive, educational website designed and kept current by the Stark County 4-H Junior Fair Web Team has had more than 400,000 hits and downloads since inception. This activity is funded by private and elected officials’ donations. The educational website consists of rules, guidelines, hands-on Skillathon learning games, educational links and activities. This is a wonderful tool for communications and hands-on, fun learning activities.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)**—OSU Extension helps adults with limited resources make healthier, safer, and budget-friendlier food choices through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). EFNEP is a free program made up of eight lessons designed to help families with children make healthier choices. Participants increase skills in decision making related to nutrition, stretching food dollars, increasing physical activity, parenting, food safety and resource management. Working with 17 Stark County community partners, OSU Extension EFNEP enrolled 154 adults impacting 526 family members within Stark County. Of participants, 86% showed improvement in one or more nutrition practices such as making healthy food choices, preparing food without adding salt, reading nutrition labels or having children eat breakfast, and 78% of participants showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices such as planning meals, comparing prices, not running out of food or using grocery lists.
- Stark County Extension is partnering with Portage County Extension and Fame Fathers in Summit, Stark and Portage Counties as part of a **Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) Sustainable Community Project grant** from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture. This five-year grant totaling \$560,000 started in late 2013 and funds the efforts that will address local concerns on the importance of active fathering and the nutritional health of youth and adults.

Stark County receives \$116,993 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension’s local-state-federal partnership.