

2014 County Highlights



MEIGS County

BUCKEYE HILLS EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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The year 2014 marked the 100th anniversary of Extension. Extension staff, volunteers, 4-H members and community members took time this year to celebrate our past while looking toward our future by holding an Extension Centennial Event during the Meigs County Fair. Participants learned about Extension's history and different program areas—and jobs that may be available in each of those areas. Thanks to the local community for allowing Extension to have a positive impact in Meigs County.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- The Meigs County **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)** had a total of 1,408 direct contacts in 2014. These direct contacts received programming in the areas of MyPlate, vegetables and fruits, food shopping, and food safety. Thirty classes were single lessons, and 104 were part of a series. Four hundred two participants (41 percent) stated they planned to make changes recommended. Agencies that partner with OSU Extension to provide SNAP-Ed classes include Job and Family Services; The Maples; Meigs County Council on Aging; Meigs County Women, Infant and Children; Help Me Grow; Meigs County District Libraries; Meigs Afterschool Program; Meigs County MRDD; Carleton Schools and Meigs Industries; Adult Basic Literacy Education; and Meigs County Cancer Initiative.
- **Colorectal cancer** rates in Meigs County are 17.6 percent higher than that for Ohio, and death from colorectal cancer is 35 percent higher than Ohio. To help raise local awareness of this issue, the Blue Star Healthy Colon

Initiative visited Meigs County. A collaboration of Meigs County Cancer Initiative, Ohio State University Medical College and Ohio State University Extension under an OSU Cares Grant, the project featured an inflatable 30-foot walk-through colon (Super Colon) exhibited at Powell's Food Fair during their Cancer Awareness Week. It provided an interactive educational tool to help explain colon cancer to targeted clientele and families. Of those who completed the pre-posttests, substantial increases in knowledge and intentions for screening were reported. One man told a Super Colon volunteer, "I came because I wanted to understand why my wife is no longer with me. I don't want that (colon cancer) to happen to anyone else."

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- In 2014, **Meigs County 4-H** reached approximately 900 youth in Meigs County through traditional 4-H Clubs, 4-H Camp, school enrichment programs and special interest programs. One of the 2013 Meigs County 4-H graduates had this to say about her 4-H experience, "Being in 4-H has encouraged me and helped me to become more socially active and involved. It has opened up a whole new world of leadership and helped me develop into the young woman I am today. Whether it was helping rid me of my butterflies before my first judging or helping me lean towards doing the most I am capable of in life, 4-H has helped me develop into a young adult preparing to follow my dreams." Research from Tufts University supports this young lady, reporting that 4-H members are four times more likely to make contributions to their communities and two times more likely to be civically active than their counterparts.



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- **4-H Camp** offers youths a safe place to make new friends, try new things and have lots of fun. In 2014, 33 campers and six counselors from Meigs County attended Canter's Cave 4-H Camp, enjoying nature hikes, canoeing, swimming, crafts, line dancing, campfire ceremonies and candle-lighting ceremonies at the conclusion of camp. Counselors receive training in first aid and safety, child development, games, crafts, setting boundaries and more to help them prepare to allow campers a safe, enjoyable time at camp. In research conducted by the University of Wisconsin, 96 percent of 4-H Camp Counselors reported that skills learned through camping would help them in a future career, and 93 percent stated they learned skills that they would use in their communities in a leadership role. Closer to home, one of Meigs County 4-H's 2014 graduates had this to say about her camping experiences: "Before this past summer, I had no idea what I wanted to major in. The place I found the major I was passionate about was at State 4-H Special Needs Camp. I met a girl who was deaf, and she is the biggest reason for my decision. I found the girl fascinating because of the personality that she expressed without ever saying a word. As I left the camp, I was confident I had found something (speech and language pathology) that I am passionate about and will love doing on a daily basis."

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Two **Pesticide Applicator Recertification** trainings were held for 16 agribusinesses involved in nearly \$4 million in local agricultural income.
- Twenty-three county residents participated in a local **plant exchange**. At the exchange, new Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension educator Marcus McCartney led a discussion on soil pH and soil testing. In 2014, 19 individuals received assistance in reviewing their soil tests, covering 850 acres of grain crops, hay fields, pasture and vegetables. But this kind of soil information is not just for farmers. Soil pH is vital for proper plant growth and development. Attendees were taught how pH directly relates to nutrient availability in the soil for plant uptake, and they were shown examples of products that could be used to aid in adjusting the soil's pH.
- Over 75 homeowners, landscapers, public employees and conservationists from two states attended **Planting the Seeds of Hope**, which emphasized both the need to understand how people are connected with the world around them, and the need to generate excitement and knowledge about that world among the younger generations. Speaker topics included misunderstood critters, moving youth to action, empowering children to be

stewards of the earth, bringing children to the forest and connecting kids with wildlife and habitat.

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- In addition to preparing youth for successful careers, which will impact the future of the county, youth also contribute a more immediate impact. During the **2014 Meigs County Fair**, 4-H and FFA members received over \$216,000 by selling their project animals. These young people work with their animals for several months in order to learn compassion, recordkeeping skills and knowledge of animal husbandry.

Meigs County receives \$48,387 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.