

# 2014 County Highlights

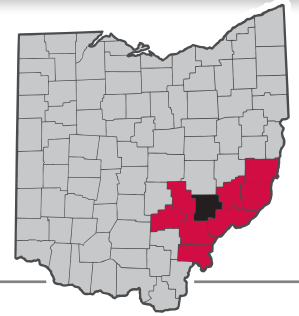


## MORGAN County

### BUCKEYE HILLS EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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#### STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- **Successful Co-Parenting:** Nearly half of divorces in Morgan County involve minor children. Developed by OSU Extension, Successful Co-Parenting helps divorcing parents reduce the negative impacts on children by providing techniques to reduce conflict and communicate effectively about co-parenting issues. Of parents who participated in Morgan County in 2014, 78 percent reported they learned new information and plan to use it.
- **Safety Around the Home and Farm:** Each year, county residents are seriously injured or killed around farm or recreational equipment. In June, over 100 adults attended a presentation on prevention of farm-related accidents. In addition, 18 ATV safety presentations were made in 2014 to 364 elementary students in Morgan County.
- **Gateway Communities:** This program takes a regional approach to economic development for communities adjacent to public lands. Morgan County Extension was part of a six-member, three-county team that attended an intensive three-day workshop to learn how to build relationships, identify common assets and create a regional economic development strategy. To date, an additional 10 partners have been brought into the core group. A localized Gateway Communities workshop was organized for October 2014. Five AmeriCorps members are working on specific project development, and a series of "Tourism Tuesday" educational programs are taking place throughout the three counties. The goal is to create long-term buy-in, developing

a marketing and branding program for the three counties and a plan for increasing the region's entrepreneurial base.

#### PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- **4-H Camp:** During overnight 4-H Camp, campers build new friendships, experience group living, learn communication skills, explore the outdoor environment and engage in healthy recreation. In 2014, Morgan County 4-H Camp was opened to non-4-H members for the first time. The goals were to give those kids the same opportunities as 4-H members, to promote the 4-H program in the county, and to increase camp numbers. Non-4-H members at camp increased the total camper numbers by 10 percent. The new campers reported they enjoyed the program and planned to encourage friends to attend next year. One youth stated, "I thought 4-H was just about showing your animals at the fair, and I live in town. I did not know I could take photography." Two other non-4-H campers asked for names of 4-H Clubs near their homes. One youth requested materials explaining opportunities such as camp counselors for older 4-H youth.
- **4-H Volunteers:** Studies indicate the importance of reaching youth through positive activities, actively engaging them in a safe environment with a caring adult. In 4-H youth development, the 4-H volunteer plays that role. To ensure strong leadership, four newsletters were mailed to 86 4-H volunteers. Twenty-three volunteers from community clubs participated in the annual advisor training, and nine individuals completed the new volunteer process.



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## ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- **Forages:** Morgan County is in the Appalachian foothills, making most of the land suitable for forest or forage cover. Managing forages can improve utilization for livestock, improving profitability for farmers. Nine programs to over 260 clientele were provided in Morgan County about the importance of forages, how to improve utilization and how to reduce erosion and other types of pollution. In addition, local research plots on crops to extend the grazing season have been established to help farmers reduce costs and produce higher quality forages.
- **Fourteenth Annual Ag and Livestock Field Day:** Each year, Morgan County Extension plans a major “Field Day” in the county. In August, over 100 people attended the meeting at the Pletcher Family Farm. The Field Day included a tour of a windmill used to pump spring water to cattle, a feedlot and field crops. Participants learned about safely and humanely handling cattle; disease traceability and various supplementations to improve performance of livestock; marketing crops and livestock; and new fertilizer licensing requirements. This type of program helps producers in Morgan County become more competitive in a challenging environment.
- **Master Gardener Volunteers:** Seven new Master Gardeners were trained in Morgan County in 2014, bringing the total of active Master Gardener Volunteers to 28. As the group has grown, so has the overall contribution to the community, particularly as it builds new partnerships. In 2014, the group began a gardening education series at the library. Programs were conducted on container gardening, invasive plants and effective pruning. Another successful relationship was built between the Master Gardeners and The Wilds. Master Gardeners worked with members of The Wilds’ Restoration Ecology Department to improve and maintain two large education garden spaces. In addition, the group continued its work at the community garden and with Habitat for Humanity. In all, the group logged over 500 volunteer hours in 2014.

During 2014, Extension offered six programs attracting over 250 people in Morgan County. Evaluations indicated 98 percent will make more informed decisions about leasing property.

- **Pesticide Applicator Training:** In January, 21 producers attended a pesticide recertification course that is required every three years. As a result, 90 percent improved personal safety, and 90 percent improved practices to protect the environment. In addition, 13 Junior and Senior FFA students attended classes on pesticide training and were tested to receive a license. Those with a license can adopt broader job responsibilities, prepare enhanced resumes and develop a greater understanding of pesticides and how to use them in a safe and judicious manner.

**Morgan County receives \$41,699 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension’s local-state-federal partnership.**

## ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- **The Impacts of Drilling for Oil and Gas:** During the past year, information on oil and gas production, leasing, and pipeline construction continued to be one of the most important topics in the county. Extension programming focuses on the process of horizontal drilling; the impacts to the environment, communities, and families; and the leasing process for shale development and pipeline construction.