

2014 County Highlights



PIKE County

OHIO VALLEY EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Pike County Extension and the Pike County Healthy Lifestyles Initiative (PHLI) conducted nutrition and health education classes in 2014. Topics were chosen based on the number of food stamp recipients (28 percent of the population), the number of children on free and reduced lunches (54.4 percent), the percent of the adult population who are obese (32 percent) and the high rate of unemployment in the county. Classes attracted over 200 people and included "Shopping Matters Grocery Store Tours;" "Healthy Eating and Diabetes Self-Management;" "Stress Management;" and "Food Safety."
- The "Shopping Matters Grocery Store Tours" attracted 48 participants. All participants completed a program survey revealing that half participate in some type of food assistance program and 64 percent did not compare unit prices before participating. After the program, participants said they learned about comparing unit prices and counting the sugar (carbs) and sodium content of food, and comparing items to get the best price and quantity. Participant comments included, "The sodium content in food, I didn't realize so much was in canned food even if it says 'low sodium' or 'heart healthy'" and "Those more expensive foods may not be better for you than cheaper foods."
- PHLI and Pike County Extension received a \$500 grant from Marshall University to implement the grocery store tour program and offer a \$10 "Shopping Challenge" to participants.

- The USDA's Midwest Region Food and Nutrition Service funds **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)**, which targets food stamp recipients and teaches basic nutrition/food safety/meal management/food security/budgeting programs. Funding for SNAP-Ed in Pike County since 1994 totals \$752,581, with \$62,463 in fiscal year 2014. Also known as the Family Nutrition Program, SNAP-Ed reached 1,926 participants in 2014 during 238 classes. In addition, 12 Summer Food Service Programs provided nutrition education to 265 children in 2014.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Pike County agricultural sales have increased to \$23.4 million, and Pike County Extension provides **agricultural resource expertise** to boost productivity. Farm management topics include developing farm leases, negotiating cash rents, enterprise analysis and budgeting. Agronomic issues include pesticide training and recertification, planting recommendations and weed identification. A soybean limitation study helps identify potentially harmful factors such as disease and pests to ultimately help improve yield. Livestock producers receive assistance with ration-balancing, developing herd health programs, Quality Assurance Training and marketing strategies. In addition, Pike County Extension conducts many on-farm visits to help horticultural producers resolve crisis situations relative to plant disease, spray drift and insect control.



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- In 2014, the Pike County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources educator planned and taught at two **Small Farm Colleges** attended by 63 people. Surveys indicated 45 percent of the participants represented female, minority or socially disadvantaged farmers, and 78 percent were new clientele to Extension programming. The average farm size was 76 acres with average ownership of 12 years. Postprogram surveys indicated 63 percent of the participants developed or changed their farm use plan after attending these colleges.
- **Increasing Profitable Crop Yields Above Trendline**, a graduated signature program of OSU Extension, helps producers improve yields and profitability. Pike County Extension provides information on forage utilization, hay quality and matching forage resources to animal needs. Pike County Extension also initiated an herbicide research plot to control spiny amaranth in pastures. A field night at the Jackson Agricultural Research Station attracted 138 participants. According to pre/post surveys, participants indicated they increased their knowledge by 14 percent on 10 topics relative to weed control in forages, fence construction and low-stress beef-cattle handling.
- Working with community volunteers, **Pike Gardeners Unlimited** reached 28 participants in its fourth year. The project promotes community gardening to educate people to raise their own food. The Pike County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources educator provided technical expertise to both participants and volunteers who helped gardeners learn cultural practices and ways to identify and control pests. Promotional efforts target those needing food assistance.
- More than 500 third graders from Pike County and surrounding areas and nearly 50 volunteers participated in the annual **Agricultural Experience Day** in cooperation with the local Farm Bureau. Students learned about science, math, agriculture and natural resources, and they applied classroom lessons and increased their awareness of the variety of agricultural and 4-H programming.
- **4-H camping programs** remain one of our main youth development programs, with 138 children attending five overnight summer camps and winter retreats. In 2014, 20 county teens volunteered as counselors to ensure all participants have a safe and fun camp. Teens are required to attend a two-day “Counselor College” training, which enhances their leadership and workforce development skills.
- The 4-H program partnered with local businesses and the “Community Safety Net” program, where over 100 school youth were provided educational booklets on **staying safe** in their communities.
- The **Pike County Fair** is the largest event in the county and gives 4-H members the opportunity to exhibit their projects. The positive relationships among the county commissioners, Pike County Agricultural Society, OSU Extension, 4-H volunteers and parents brings the community together for a week of social activity, health and community well-being.

Pike County receives \$62,463 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension’s local-state-federal partnership.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- The **Pike County 4-H youth development program** continued to grow in 2014, with 1,850 youth participating in activities led by 250 adult volunteers. Fifty-seven organized community clubs provided safe, inclusive environments for youth to determine goals, make decisions and envision their future. Members developed leadership and interviewing skills as part of being club members and officers, as well as by completing their selected projects.
- Extension celebrated its centennial in 2014, and over 800 youth and adults participated in five programs to mark the occasion. The celebrations included STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) activities on lava lamps; marshmallow launchers; COSI learning boxes; and raising, buying and selling a beef animal. Participants learned how Extension has been an integral part of educational activities that benefit counties throughout the state.