

2014 County Highlights



PUTNAM County

MAUMEE VALLEY EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- **4-H Tech Wizards:** Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) are at the core of the 4-H Tech Wizards afterschool and group-mentoring program for fourth- and fifth-grade youth. 4-H Tech Wizards capitalizes on emerging technology as a way of involving under-represented youth and their families in learning basic life and workforce skills. The program helps youth aspire to post-secondary education, productive jobs, successful careers and community engagement. The weekly sessions, offered in collaboration with Ottawa Local Schools, enroll 20 youth annually.
- **Annual Farm Safety Camp:** Putnam County Extension worked collaboratively with the Putnam County Health Department to conduct the 15th Annual Farm Safety Camp. All nine school districts participated in the countywide program. Putnam County's third-grade students rotated through several sessions on basic first aid and grain entrapment and escape. Pond, chemical, electricity and tractor safety sessions were also offered. Four hundred sixty-three students out of a possible 525 attended the camp, and they completed a survey with a 94 percent response rate. Students were able to recall with a minimum accuracy level of 88 percent 10 out of 12 safety messages taught at the day camps.
- **4-H Program Profile:** The 4-H program had 740 traditional 4-H members completing over 1,300 4-H projects, with a total member project completion rate of more than 98 percent. Members were involved in 25 community clubs led by 142 trained adult advisors. The International 4-H

Exchange Program brought two 4-H members from Japan to Putnam County. The expanded shooting sports program doubled enrollment in 2014 as it added two new shooting disciplines to its list of offerings. 4-H Camp enrollment held steady at 150 campers and trained counselors attending in 2014.

- **Real Money, Real World:** This hands-on experience gives young people the opportunity to make lifestyle and budget choices similar to those they will face as adults. In 2014, Putnam County Extension 4-H offered the program to 890 students in seventh through twelfth grade. The Real Money, Real World program consisted of a presimulation preparation (including lessons on managing a checkbook, understanding a paycheck and lifestyle choices), a hands-on budget management and decision-making simulation, and a post-session evaluation of choices made. Students participated in four hours of classroom training and two hours in the simulation.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

- **Agromony Night:** At the 2014 Agromony Night, over 105 farmers representing one-fourth of Putnam County cropland learned about corn and soybeans pests and how to reduce phosphorus in Lake Erie.
- **Pesticide Applicator Training:** Putnam County Extension conducted six Pesticide Applicator Recertification meetings to 350 people. Meetings consisted of three hours on proper pesticide use and ways to protect the environment (bees, water supplies). Farmers also learned about new pests affecting area crops.



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- **County Educational Meetings:** Putnam County Extension hosted a CAUV meeting (with 125 attendees), an OSU Income Tax School (with 36 attendees), a Quicken workshop (with 10 attendees), an ag issues workshop (with 54 attendees), a sustainable forage production for beef/dairy (with 27 attendees), and monthly ag council meetings. Three commodity banquets were also held (beef, pork and dairy) for 900 people.
- **Youth Development:** Three hundred twenty-eight Putnam County youth attended two Quality Assurance Training sessions, where they learned how to raise their 4-H/FFA livestock projects in a humane manner. Proper animal care, nutrition, reading a feed tag label and the correct use of antibiotics were discussed. Putnam County grade schools sent 473 third graders to learn about agriculture and natural resources at Conservation Camp.
- **Soil Health Workshops and Cover Crops Tour:** One hundred seventy farmers attended three soil health workshops, and 55 others attended a cover crops/soil health tour at David Brandt's farm. The programs helped farmers learn ways to improve their soil and efficiently utilize soil nutrients to minimize fertilizer costs.
- **Soil Health Research at Putnam County SHARP Site:** Putnam County Commissioners gave 11 acres for replicated soil health research. Research at these long-term plots will be conducted on sustainable and economical yields, and ways to reduce phosphorus runoff on a corn-soybean-wheat rotation using conventional tillage, no-till and no-till-plus cover crops.
- **Publications:** Fifty agricultural articles were published in the "Putnam County Sentinel." Articles were also published in adjoining county papers, the "Ohio Country Journal," "Successful Farming," "Farm and Dairy," "No-Till Farming," and other state and national publications. Articles focused on cover crop nutrient management, soil compaction and water quality.
- **Correspondence and Phone Calls:** Handled this year were over 350 phone calls, 60 emails and 45 office visits in regards to cover crops, farm rental arrangements, farm management issues and horticulture.
- **Master Gardeners:** The Master Gardeners hosted 250 people at an Educational Spring Garden Fair in April. Sessions focused on native plants, the correct way to plant trees and finding gardening information on the Internet. On "First Fridays" in the summer, Master Gardeners hosted an informational booth in Ottawa, answering garden and lawn questions, passing out tick removal kits and selling potted plants.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed):** A total of 94 adults and 413 youth from Putnam County participated in one of 61 programs presented in a series format, which promoted behavior change. A total of 159 classes were provided by Extension's SNAP-Ed program. Nutrition, food safety and food-budgeting classes provided participants with information and hands-on learning experiences. Most participants indicated they planned to make positive changes at these classes. One participant who has been coming to programs throughout the year is now wearing clothes two sizes smaller.
- **County Employee Lunch and Learn:** Putnam County Commissioners funded lunch-and-learn programs for their employees. Two breakfast meals with nutrition education were provided to 20–22 participants at the county garage. The employees at the garage interacted positively, and some stated they appreciated the information. Seven lunch programs covering a range of topics from eating during the holidays to portion distortion were offered to county employees at the OSU Extension office. Participants commented that they are using some of the strategies suggested at these presentations.

Putnam County receives \$48,809 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.