

2014 County Highlights

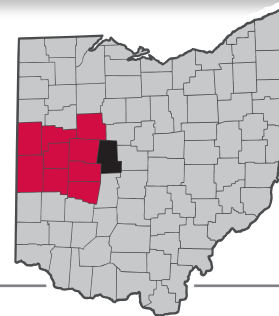


UNION County

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- **Food Safety:** Home food preservation safety information was distributed to 55 adults at the Union County Farmer's Market. Forty-four adults participated in six home food preservation classes, and OSU Extension offered pressure canner testing. All participants indicated an increase in knowledge, and all planned to make changes in their procedures for canning and freezing food. In addition, 25 people received egg safety information at a safety promotion at a Kroger store.
- **Parenting:** Three classes on parenting styles, child development, communication and building family strengths attracted 32 parents. All participants said they had made changes in their parenting practices as a result.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed):** While attending SNAP-Ed programs in Union County, participants learned to select fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products for a healthy diet; to use limited resources to plan, purchase and prepare food for their families; to be physically active every day; and to store and handle food so it is safe to eat. This information was learned at 177 direct education programs held in cooperation with the Union County Department of Job and Family Services, nonprofit social services agencies, low-income housing sites and congregate meal sites of the Senior Nutrition Program. In self-reported information, 75 percent of the participants indicated they plan meals ahead of time, with 63.6 percent using MyPlate to make food choices with a limited budget. Of the participants, 77.8 percent indicated they eat fruits and vegetables as snacks.

- **Farm and Home:** Fourteen farm wives increased their work-family balance skills and their family communication at two Annie's Project workshops.
- **Budgeting:** The 14 adults who attended three basic budgeting classes indicated the classes helped them improve their practices in managing finances.
- **Diabetes and Weight Management:** Nine adults completed a Dining with Diabetes class. All indicated changes in eating habits and methods of cooking. In addition, 30 adults participated in an online Spring Weight Challenge.
- **Sun Safety:** Extension offered sun safety training and DermaScan screenings to 115 county and city employees at a health fair. All indicated increased knowledge as a result of attending.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- **Union County 4-H Membership:** In 2014, Union County 4-H had 1,053 members in 49 clubs led by 164 volunteers. These youth enrolled in over 1,800 projects in 2014. Over 500 youth and their families participated in youth livestock Quality Assurance Training taught and coordinated by the 4-H educator. The training is designed to assure quality care for animals being raised in 4-H projects. In 2014, the key topics studied by livestock project members included responsible use of antibiotics in food animals and related recordkeeping skills.
- **Camp Counselors:** All 43 Union County teens who volunteer as 4-H Camp Counselors completed 24 hours of training and contributed 92 hours of volunteer service as leaders



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at 4-H Camp. Their participation serves several purposes: It provides quality staffing for a camp experience for younger 4-H members while at the same time providing job training and skill development for teens. In evaluations, teen counselors self-reported gains in their ability to be responsible for others. They also reporting learning or enhancing skills related to organization, time management and communication.

- **Junior Fair Boards:** Union County provides an opportunity for teens to participate in fair management and leadership responsibility through two Junior Fair Boards. In 2014, 95 teens serving on Junior Fair Boards participated in eight hours of leadership training including event management, public speaking and conflict resolution taught by the 4-H educator. Teens contributed an average of 25 hours each of leadership service though their participation on the Union County and Richwood Junior Fair Boards, for a total of over 2,300 hours of service.
- **Cloverbuds:** The countywide 4-H Cloverbud program involved 61 youth ages 5–8 years old. Monthly meetings in 2014 focused on nutrition education and healthy lifestyle choices. Each meeting included active physical activity and nutrition activities.

- **Master Gardeners:** The Master Gardeners had 52 active members and 12 interns in 2014. Throughout the year, Union County Master Gardener Volunteers took leadership positions on the committee planning the 2014 Ohio State Master Gardener Conference held in Delaware in October. A Master Gardener Scholarship was awarded again this year to a local student attending Ohio State University ATI in Wooster. Proceeds from the two Master Gardener plant sales provide funds for the scholarship and other projects. The Master Gardener Volunteers continued numerous beautification and educational programs around Union County. New projects included the Helpline, Magnetics Springs flower beds and questions answered at the Bluegrass Bridge Festival. From October 1, 2013, to September 30, 2014, our Master Gardeners drove 25,587 miles and volunteered 3,010 hours of service to 23 different projects. These projects reached a total of 947 people: 621 adults and 326 youths. In addition, Master Gardener members attained 732 hours of horticulture education.

Union County receives \$33,338 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- **Annual Weed Survey:** A survey of over 80 soybean fields representing 4,200 acres identified the nonsoybean (weed) plants and the level of infestation. The most common weeds were giant ragweed, marestail and volunteer corn. About 37 percent of the fields having giant ragweed and marestail had a high enough level of infestation to reduce yield. However, weed pressure from these two weeds was reduced by five percent overall compared with 2013, and 15 percent compared with 2012. Research shows weeds must be controlled within the first four to six weeks after planting to avoid yield loss. In addition, if weeds are kept out of the field for four to six weeks after crop emergence, any weeds that later invade will not likely reduce yield significantly. Weed control monitoring and herbicide program updates are critical and are the focus points of the annual agronomy update.
- **Agriculture and Natural Resources Programs:** Five hundred ninety-five people participated in offered in Union County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources programs during 2014. Some of the topics included agronomy, farm management, nutrient management and pesticide safety and education.