

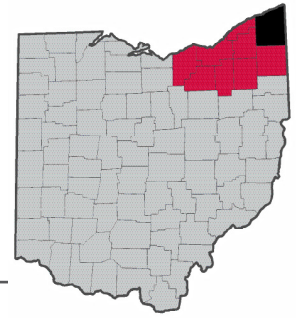
2015 County Highlights

Ashtabula County

Western Reserve Extension Education and Research Area

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ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Nearly 1,300 Ashtabula County producers and landowners participated in 26 production agriculture and natural resources programs in 2015. These programs were held on a variety of management issues which included cover crop management, factors affecting beef quality, winter grape damage assessment, pesticide recertification, rotational grazing, precision ag innovations, soybean and corn management, farm succession, and farm taxes.
- Seventy-five Ashtabula County farmers who hold a private pesticide applicator license attended a recertification session. One hundred percent of the attendees reported they had improved practices to protect the environment, had improved pesticide handling practices, and were better informed about compliance with pesticide and environmental regulations.
- OSU Extension taught for the first time in 2015 fertilizer certification workshops. Mandated by new legislation, 76 Ashtabula County farmers attended to receive their certification. Education topics included soil sampling, phosphorus and nitrogen management, crop fertility, lime recommendations, and economics of fertilizer application. Almost all strongly agreed the training increased their knowledge of phosphorus and nitrogen management. More than 75 percent of the participants agreed they would change their nutrient management practices. All farmers applying fertilizer to 50 or more acres are mandated to complete their initial certification by September 2017.
- OSU Extension conducted on-farm research in corn, soybean and miscanthus production to benefit Ashtabula County farmers. For the fifth year, Ashtabula County Extension was part of a statewide monitoring program for the western bean cutworm. Four trap locations were placed in strategic locations with 982 adults moths detected during the weekly summer checks. Data was collected at two local farms for inclusion in a statewide soybean study,

and a miscanthus research plot was maintained at the OARDC Ashtabula Outlying Agricultural Research Station in Kingsville.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- In 2015, the Ashtabula County 4-H youth development program had 48 chartered 4-H Clubs with 905 members (144 Cloverbuds) guided by 175 adult volunteers. These youth successfully participated in 1,307 projects across the 4-H program. Additionally, 30 new volunteers were screened and trained to work with the Ashtabula County 4-H program. Ninety-five percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed the information presented will help them in working as a 4-H volunteer. Committed to personal development and growth, Ashtabula County 4-H volunteers dedicated over 450 hours to extended learning through participation in county, regional and state level adult learning activities and development trainings.
- In 2015, 187 youth (155 campers, 32 youth counselors) participated in Ashtabula County Extension's camping program. This camping program consists of two main functions: 4-H Camp Counselor Training and 4-H Camp Week. In 2015, 32 teenagers participated in the intensive 4-H Camp Counselor Training program and then served as camp counselors during Ashtabula County's 4-H Camp Week held from June 28 to July 4, 2015 at 4-H Camp Whitewood in Windsor, Ohio. Once, again Ashtabula County had a sold out camp with 187 youth at camp.
- Guided by two teachers and county 4-H volunteers with the support of teen leaders and adult volunteers, 38 youth ages 5 to 7 attended 4-H Cloverbud Fun Days held in early July. STEM-focused learning activities guided this three-day program focused on welcoming youth to 4-H and teaching social, life and community skills.
- The Ashtabula County Junior Fair continues to be a vehicle for youth to learn leadership, social responsibility and service. In 2015, 14 Junior Fair Board members guided by



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volunteer advisors took on even greater responsibilities and tasks, including the development of the Agricultural Adventure Scavenger Hunt held for families at the 2015 Ashtabula County Fair. Six members attended the 2015 Junior Fair Conference and felt this year they were able to develop their public speaking skills and take more of a leadership role in the planning of Junior Fair activities. In addition, Ashtabula County Extension offered Quality Assurance Training to 380 youth who exhibited a market or lactating animal at the fair. These sessions taught the proper and ethical ways to raise a market animal. One participant stated the training helped her realize the importance of raising a quality project for a quality food product.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) targets SNAP-eligible recipients. Snap-Ed presented 146 direct programs reaching 104 unduplicated adult participants. In these programs, participants were encouraged to make healthy food choices, practice food safety techniques and manage their food budgets. Eighty-six percent of the participants are now confident they can use basic cooking skills such as cutting fruits and vegetables, measuring ingredients, and following a recipe. We reached 4,228 participants through indirect programming. This year, Ashtabula County added youth programs at Geneva Platt R. Spencer Elementary School. We reached 951 youth through our youth programs and summer foods program. Eighty-three percent of the students now eat breakfast as a result of our programs.
- With support through sponsorships from the entire Ashtabula County community, Ashtabula County Farm Bureau and OSU Extension held another successful Ag Day. Nearly 1,000 members of the class of 2026 descended on the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds on May 8, 2015 to explore the many different aspects of agriculture. During Ag Day, 976 students traveled around the fairgrounds to 12 interactive stations, where they were able to see, touch and smell agriculture. Every classroom was provided with a tour guide to help them on their adventure throughout the day. Every station was taught by a volunteer presenter who shared education on the diversity of agriculture in Ashtabula County. More than 200 volunteers were on hand for the day.
- Master Gardener Volunteers shared research-based information with gardeners through workshops, community gardens and one-on-one consultations. In total, the 40 Master Gardener Volunteers contributed over 3,500 hours (value of \$75,110), reaching over 900 residents. In addition, six residents completed the 50-hour training course to become certified Master Gardener Volunteers.
- Ashtabula County's school enrichment program kept in full swing with activities in all seven schools. Over 300 students participated in other various enrichment programs. A teacher whose class participated in the robotics program stated, "It is wonderful that, as students go through this program, I can reference items to what we have done in the classroom and make the connection from the book to actual applications."

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- OSU Extension's Real Money, Real World program helped give middle and high school students an understanding of how income and life choices can affect their future income. Participants learned how much to expect to pay for housing, transportation, and childcare, and how to balance their "wants" and "needs" with the income they receive from their future employment. This hands-on program was offered to 1,200 eighth graders in seven public schools and to 270 members of the junior class at Ashtabula County Career and Technical Center. Teachers commented how this program helped to spark student conversations about money usage, created awareness for them on what their parents spend on living expenses, and what they can do today to improve their income in the future.
- Due to the new Farm Bill, eight training sessions were held for farmers to teach them about the new Farm Bill programs choices. In total, 285 producers attended the training sessions and 18 individual farmer consultations were conducted. One hundred percent of the program participants indicated they felt more confident in selecting a farm safety net choice as a result of their attendance.

Ashtabula County receives \$75,702 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.