

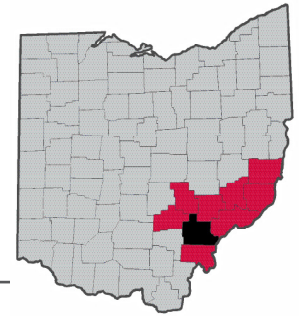
2015 County Highlights

Athens County

Buckeye Hills Extension Education and Research Area

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PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- Athens County has a thriving teen leadership group that helps with camp, community service and leadership opportunities in the county. This year, we had 24 camp counselors who trained from February through June to run three different camps and four Cloverbud Science Days. They planned camp from start to finish, creating critical life skills that would assist them in being leaders in their careers and college. Several counselors even stated that they credited their camp counseling interviewing experience with helping them get top scholarships for college by learning how to keep eye contact, shake hands and properly answer interview questions. The office also hosted two teenage interns and one college intern during the summer months. The interns helped with recordkeeping, planning and overall office support. These internships provided the youths with college credit (in one case) and experience in workforce development, with at least two of the youth considering Extension as a job in the future.
- In all, 85 youth ages 8–14, 23 teen counselors and 14 OSU Extension and camp staff participated in 4-H Camp at Tar Hollow State Park. We added an extra day, so over five days, campers and counselors experienced the dynamic of group living; were educated about the importance of communication skills, citizenship, conservation, and the value of teamwork; and participated in recreational activities while building lifelong friendships. When asked, youth stated that the top skills camp helped with were social, leadership and responsibility. We also added a water/windmill challenge, thanks to a camp grant from Monsanto, and youth enjoyed engineering a structure that would hold the most water but use the least amount of materials. Experiences like this one help youth learn about future careers, and many campers expressed that they enjoyed the challenge and learned new information about the current state of the environment and alternative energy.
- We organized Quality Assurance (QA) Training for about 450 youth in 2015. This year, we introduced an evaluation in which the majority of participants stated that they came out of the training with more knowledge than they had going in. QA is essential in demonstrating how to ethically treat the animals we put into our food chain. Because of this training, youth learned how to properly fill out a Drug Use Notification Form, how to prevent diseases from spreading, and how to properly identify a medication label. This knowledge is necessary to create current and future farmers who ethically care for their animals. We once again doubled our participation in Skillathon, which helps teach youth what their animals look like inside, how the animals operate and what diseases the animals face, all of which are issues the youth need to know about in order to properly care for their livestock.
- In 2015, we trained over 100 advisors (up from last year) on new policies, food safety, child abuse awareness and leadership, all of which can be used in their careers and other volunteer work. These advisors oversaw our 50 4-H Clubs and helped over 670 participating youth complete projects. If each volunteer donates 100 volunteer hours per year (the average) at the current Ohio rate of \$22.14 per volunteer hour, this equates to \$221,400 worth of volunteer support to our county's future leaders. Within clubs, members learned parliamentary meeting structure, ways to work together on booth/float projects and coordination of community service projects.
- In 2015, Athens County 4-H had 563 participants between the ages of 8–18 take projects that teach many different subjects such as science, arts, food and nutrition, and livestock. Many youth report that these projects inspire their interests, which eventually leads the youth toward their career goals. In addition, the 4-H Cloverbud program for youth in kindergarten through second grade continued to grow, with 112 Cloverbuds in 2015, with six county



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opportunities for them to gather (600 percent increase since 2011). Cloverbuds are engaged in educational, activity-based, noncompetitive programming in both club and community settings. In 2015, we continued the Cloverbud Day Camp as a full day on the Athens County Fairgrounds, where over 40 Cloverbuds experienced several rotations of arts and crafts, games, a petting zoo and nature. We also held four science days, where Cloverbuds studied concepts of aviation, gravity, construction, etc. As a result, we were able to see how Cloverbuds progressed in their social interactions, confidence and learning skills, and many evolved from shy youth to confident campers.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Livestock and forage programming included working with producers and producer groups to deliver production information that allowed the producers and producer groups to make informed management decisions. Producers attended training on the cost of hay production. The 21 participants indicated that the information would be used to make future management decisions that would lead to cost savings.
- A livestock and forages newsletter was started and delivered to over 50 producers on a monthly basis, with timely production information. This has led to a request for additional information on 610 occasions.
- Eleven new Master Gardener Volunteers trained to join the 30 active Master Gardener Volunteers in the county. Volunteers contributed 1,360 hours of service at a value of \$28,560 to the community.
- A horticulture and agronomy newsletter was started and delivered to 45 clients on a monthly basis with production information and management tips. This has led to an additional 1,786 contacts for information on horticulture and agronomy topics.
- Pesticide education included eight producers being recertified in the safe handling of pesticides. One hundred percent indicated that the information would help them properly apply pesticides.
- A two-hour fertilizer application course certified eight producers in meeting the new Ohio Department of Agriculture guidelines. Fifty percent of the participants were not required to take the course but wanted to make sure they were following best management practices for water quality.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Athens County Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) provided 35 direct education classes on the topics of MyPlate, fruits and vegetables, dairy, protein, whole grains, and food shopping. A total of 139 adults eligible for SNAP benefits attended classes. These numbers reflect a transition time for Athens County SNAP-Ed, with a new program assistant coming on board in May 2015. The Athens County program assistant participated in the OSU Extension SNAP-Ed Cooking Matters pilot program for fiscal year 2015. During the pilot program, we partnered with Athens County Women, Infants and Children's Program to provide a six-week cooking and nutrition course. The classes were held in the kitchen at the Athens County Department of Job and Family Services. A total of eight participants attended two or more classes, while six participants graduated by attending four or more classes.

Athens County receives \$27,152 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.