

2015 County Highlights

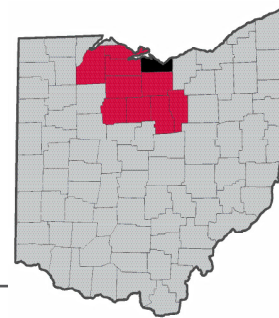
Erie County

Erie Basin Extension Education and Research Area

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Financial literacy continues to comprise an important part of OSU Extension Family and Consumer Sciences outreach. OSU Extension partnered with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in 2015 to provide financial training to social service agency personnel in an effort to increase financial empowerment to their participants. Budgeting classes, homebuyer education, and Real Money, Real World (for area high school students) were primary outreach topics.
- Countywide nutrition education helped over 3,500 residents make improvements to their health. An emphasis on health and microbiome was shared with program participants to (1) raise awareness of the healthy bacteria in their bodies, and (2) help participants comprehend how those “good” bacteria influence the immune system, risk for chronic diseases such as colon cancer, and digestive disorders including Crohn’s disease and colitis.
- As the cornerstone of the USDA’s nutrition assistance programs, the goal of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) is to improve the likelihood that persons eligible for SNAP (food stamps) will make healthy choices within a limited budget and choose active lifestyles consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate. Ohio has been part of this national program since 1992. The SNAP-Ed program assistant provides educational outreach to children in elementary classrooms and to low-income adult participants being serviced by various social service organizations and food pantries.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Erie County Extension participates in a regionwide program to provide training to pesticide applicators. This year, due to legislation addressing algae issues, Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training (FACT) was provided to

farmers through this regional program as well. Extension educators provided 1,884 hours of pesticide certification to area farmers. Additionally, 1,175 farmers were trained for their FACT requirement—this amounts to 3,525 hours of training to meet fertilizer certification requirements for area farmers. FACT programs were provided at no additional cost in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Agriculture and Farm Bureau. Erie County also coordinates a program for commercial pesticide certification and provided 223 hours of training to commercial nurseries, greenhouses and landscape businesses in the region.

- The Erie County Master Gardener Volunteers completed training for the class of 2015. These new interns are now completing their initial volunteer hours on projects such as youth education at local schools, public education at gardening programs, service to the Sandusky Greenhouse and work with the Ohio Veteran’s Home. The Master Gardener Volunteer program now has 45 active members providing over 2,000 hours of service to the surrounding community. According to the Independent Sector, which provides value to volunteer time, the current volunteer value rate is \$21.46 for the state of Ohio. At this value, Erie County Master Gardener Volunteers have provided \$42,920 in services to our community.
- Erie County Extension participated in field research to monitor for new invasive insect pests. Spotted wing Drosophila continues to significantly affect fruit and vegetable crops. More growers are noting problems with this pest and the on-farm monitoring helps them maintain crop quality. Brown marmorated stinkbug (BMSB) is another emerging pest. BMSB traps were used for the first time in the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. Two new traps and baits were trialed for their effectiveness at monitoring this emerging pest problem. Monitoring for new invasive pests reduces crop losses and can prevent application of unneeded pesticides.



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ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- Another very cold winter caused the loss of most of the peach and blackberry crop in the area. The apple crop, however, was generally good, along with other fruit crops and field vegetables. To assist growers, the Orchard Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program provided monitoring of insect pests to 17 regional orchards. This program employs three IPM scouts who monitor orchard pests on a weekly basis. Information provided to growers assists them in making pesticide application decisions. Information provided through this program reduces both production costs and environmental impacts of pesticide use in the largest orchards in the area.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- Erie County 4-H held its fourth annual event specifically for individuals with special needs to experience showing an animal at the fair. The event is open to any individual with special needs. Participants register and are then paired with a 4-H member who has an animal at the fair. The pair meet at the fair prior to the “Animal and Me” show. Each pair spends time together with their animal. The 4-H member provides knowledge, guidance and hands-on learning about the animal. The member teaches the participant about the care of the animal and how to show the animal. After the participant has spent time getting to know the member and the animal, the show begins. Together, the pair parade around the show ring and present the animal to a judge. The judge visits with each pair, asks them about the animal and asks them to demonstrate something they have learned. At the conclusion of the show, every participant receives a trophy for something he/she did best. One member had this to say about being a mentor: “This was the best part of the fair. It felt so great to help someone else achieve a dream they may not have without my help.”
- One hundred thirty-one youth participated in 4-H CARTEENS, a traffic safety program for first-time juvenile traffic offenders. Teens serve as the instructors and curriculum planners for the CARTEENS sessions. The teens develop the lesson plans and the course format, and they conduct the program for those who are assigned to it by the Erie County Juvenile Court. The local Ohio State Highway Patrol and Firelands Regional Medical Centers are also program partners. In 2015, 88 percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “This program will help me become a better, safer driver,” while 92 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they “learned something today that will stick with (them) and help (them) make better choices on the road.”
- One hundred thirty-eight youth in grades 3 through 7 attended Erie County 4-H Camp as campers. Thirty-one teens attended as camp counselors. Camp was filled to capacity two weeks before the registration deadline, and approximately 40 youth were referred to other nearby 4-H camping programs. Over the last five years, attempts have been made to diversify the Erie County 4-H Camp. This was done primarily by marketing the camp to non-4-H members through local schools. As a result, in 2015, approximately fifty-four percent of the campers at Erie County 4-H Camp were not members of a community 4-H Club. This marketing effort has increased the racial and ethnic diversity at camp, and has diversified the socioeconomic status of campers.

Erie County receives \$39,049 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension’s local-state-federal partnership.