

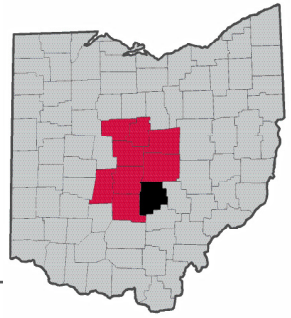
2015 County Highlights

Fairfield County

Heart of Ohio Extension Education and Research Area

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PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- More than 906 4-H members developed valuable life skills by completing more than 2,031 4-H projects for exhibit at the Fairfield County Junior Fair. More than 67 4-H youth learned about meat science, livestock growth and performance, and carcass characteristics by participating in beef, lamb and hog carcass contests at the Fairfield County Junior Fair.
- Fifty-one teens served as 4-H Camp Counselors, completing a comprehensive 4-H Camp Counselor Training program and utilizing life skills that they developed both during camp and afterward. Evaluations indicated that as a result of this training, counselors developed leadership, social, emergency preparedness, and organizational skills to provide younger 4-H members with better learning experiences.
- More than 339 Fairfield County youth developed life skills through participation in one of four summer 4-H Camps conducted by Fairfield County 4-H. More than 97 percent of campers indicated they wanted to return to camp next year.
- Twenty-eight Fairfield County 4-H members learned communication and leadership skills by participating in the Ohio 4-H Teen Conference and the Fairfield County Teen Conference Overnighter. Participating youth reported learning how to incorporate new ideas into future 4-H events and how to provide leadership as 4-H Camp Counselors.
- More than 235 youth and parents learned about the educational benefits of the 4-H youth development program by participating in the seventh annual Fairfield County Discover 4-H Day. One hundred percent of participants who completed an after-event evaluation indicated that they learned something by participating in the event, and that they would recommend the event to other families.
- More than 630 4-H members learned how to ensure animal and food safety by attending one of 36 Quality Assurance Trainings taught by OSU Extension and Fairfield County Junior Fair volunteers. Through hands-on activities,

participants learned the importance of maintaining medication and treatment records, proper administration techniques, and appropriate feed processor procedures and feed tag recommendations.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- More than 7,400 Fairfield County residents participated in one of 458 classes taught by OSU Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). In post-program evaluations, 71 percent of adult participants reported eating at least one kind of fruit and one kind of vegetable daily while 68 percent of teen participants reported being physically active at least 30 minutes a day most days of the week.
- In response to the botulism outbreak that occurred in Fairfield County, OSU Extension quadrupled educational efforts in food safety and food preservation. Extensive media coverage on botulism and how to prevent it was disseminated through the newspaper, the radio, the Fairfield County Extension website and the Fairfield County Extension Facebook page. Thirteen food preservation classes reached 187 participants. While many participants were new to canning and open to information, the hardest to reach participants were those who have been canning for years. One participant who was improperly using the boiling water method to can green beans decided he was going to start using the pressure canning method based on what he learned. Ninety-five percent of the participants indicated they planned to implement safe canning practices that they learned through the program, decreasing the risk of foodborne illnesses caused by improper preservation methods.
- Using social media, Fairfield County Extension conducted three Live Healthy Live Well online health and wellness challenges. More than 201 Fairfield County adults participated, with over 82 percent reporting adopting one or more practices that may help cut the risk of developing



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chronic diseases. In follow up surveys, 95 percent said they maintained or lost weight.

- Nearly 500 seventh grade students in Lancaster City Schools learned hands-on budget management and decision making in Extension's Real Money, Real World financial education program. Nearly 80 percent of the students reported an increased understanding of the importance of having a spending plan, and 65 percent reported an increased understanding of the importance of saving money regularly.
- Two hundred five adults learned the necessary steps to better money management and developing a budget. Classes were conducted at Job and Family Services, Pearl House, Lutheran Social Services Shelter, and Head Start Parent meetings. All participants indicated learning new information, and 50 percent planned to make changes in their money management practices.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Fruit tree pruning is a needed skill for both the backyard grower and the commercial fruit producer. Twenty-five Fairfield County fruit growers pruned apple trees at Hugus Fruit Farm near Rushville in early spring. This hands-on workshop allowed participants to learn about all aspects of growing apples and peaches.
- Twenty-five individuals were trained through the Fairfield County Master Gardener Volunteer program in 2015. Those individuals will give back 50 hours of volunteer service to local Master Gardener Volunteer projects. One of the key 2015 projects has been the renovation and replanting of the Fairfield County Agriculture Center landscape. Thirty individuals worked five Saturday mornings to complete the initial tasks, giving back approximately \$3,400 thus far in volunteer service labor to Fairfield County.
- The significant drop in the value of corn since 2013 and the algal blooms that precipitated the adoption of Senate Bill 150 have continued to emphasize the need for soil testing and following Tri-State Fertilizer Recommendations when making fertilizer decisions. In 2015, an agronomy day was offered in Fairfield County and resulted in 56 participants becoming certified by the Ohio Department of Agriculture to apply fertilizer. Knowing how to properly test and fertilize soil results in potentially saving \$200 per acre in fertilizer costs spread over the coming years, and also aids in the protection of the region's water quality.
- With the new Federal Farm Bill being significantly different than previous bills, Extension took the lead in teaching the nuances and alternatives afforded through this new piece

of legislation. OSU Extension in Fairfield County resourced three local meetings and several individual consultations where 187 farmers learned their best options for enrolling in 2015 farm programs.

- Thirty-four Fairfield County fruit and vegetable growers participated in two good agricultural practices trainings. Participants learned how to grow, harvest, store and market homegrown commodities safely to reduce the risk of foodborne illness to consumers. The second nontechnology workshop was provided primarily for Amish producers that sell at a local produce auction.
- Fairfield County farmers will experience over \$100 million in agriculture and horticulture sales in 2015. This information, as well as details of how the agriculture sector positively impacts the local economy was shared with more than 600 chamber members, local politicians and consumers during the annual Taste of Fairfield County Agriculture.

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- Over 140 participants toured five Fairfield County agricultural businesses during the 2015 Local Foods and Farms Tour series. Topics ranged from growing grapes for wine production, picking your own berries, high tunnels for season extension, raising and processing sheep, growing and marketing vegetables, and raising specialty crops such as freshwater prawns, pumpkins, squash, and Christmas trees. Post-series surveys showed that 92 percent of participants would be likely to use the Extension office to gain information on agriculture, horticulture or natural resource issues. One hundred percent of survey respondents would recommend the 2016 Local Foods and Farms Tour series to others.

Fairfield County receives \$105,951 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.