

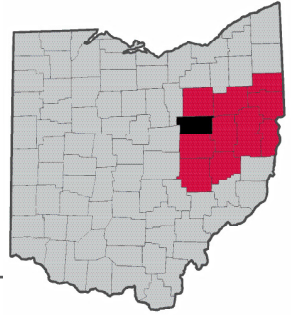
2015 County Highlights

Holmes County

Crossroads Extension Education and Research Area

75 East Clinton Street, Suite 109, Millersburg, Ohio 44654-9269

Phone: 330-674-3015 holmes.osu.edu



ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Agricultural production remains a significant source of income in Holmes County. More than 90 percent of our 1,969 farms remain under family control, with an average size of 119 acres each and 220,948 acres in farm production. The latest population census indicates that the Amish make up 50 percent of the county population. Total crop and livestock cash receipts total more the \$204,865,000. The 2014 Ohio Department of Agriculture reported for Holmes County as the following: 14,000 acres of corn, 12,000 acres of soybeans and 11,900 acres of alfalfa hay harvested. Holmes County has 17,400 milk cows and reports 55,000 for all cattle/calves, making it the third highest county in the state for both categories. Milk accounts for \$78,000,000 of the total county cash receipts, followed by \$43,000,000 from poultry and egg production. Holmes County's continued strong agricultural history makes it one of the Top 10 agriculture counties for cash receipts in Ohio.
- A collaborative effort between OSU Extension, Holmes County SWCD, and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) was used to manage the thousands of ponds in the county. A pond clinic was hosted by OSU Extension with additional presentations by SWCD and ODNR Division of Wildlife. Participants learned new information about pond weed control, fish stocking, nuisance animal control and pond safety equipment used in rescues. Pond safety kits were made by the educator and advertised throughout the county media outlets. This resulted in 70 kits being installed at ponds with no safety equipment. Also in collaboration with SWCD, silage samples were collected, ground and analyzed for moisture content, and reported to producers on timing to start chopping silage feed stock. A total of 12 collection days were set up at local auction barns, and 75 samples were analyzed and results reported to producers.
- Within the five Pesticide Applicator Training sessions offered, 286 farm managers attended and were provided with information related to crop production and controlling weed, insect and disease pests. Participants were also updated with the increased number of pest invaders to Ohio's forest system. Exit survey results indicated that the managers had made multiple changes to their operating practices due to education received through the Pesticide Applicator Training program and the Pesticide Applicator Recertification program.
- Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training (FACT), new for 2015, is the requirement for farmers meeting the state's new certification process on the restrictions for fertilizer application. Within the six FACT sessions offered, 262 participants were certified to apply fertilizer. By 2017, all applicators matching the specifications of the new rulings must attend a FACT session.
- Maple syrup production programming designed to assist maple syrup producers with making the highest quality product was held in 15 separate workshops. One was held in Holmes County, six were held within Ohio, and the remaining 11 were held out of state as state or international meetings. Maple syrup production programming reached a total of 312 maple syrup producers. With a growing demand for locally grown foods, this programming helped producers meet the demand for products. Ohio is ranked fourth nationally in maple syrup production.
- In the 3.5 years since reestablishing the OSU Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources position in Holmes County, walk-in and phone requests have increased steadily each year averaging approximately 3,000 recorded contacts with many more unrecorded contacts. Outreach efforts continue with meetings and by use of media outlets at local auction barns to get information into the hands of county clientele.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Empowerment Through Education

u.osu.edu/cfaesimpact
extension.osu.edu

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Successful Co-Parenting, a program for divorcing/separating parents of minor children, was attended by more than 50 participants. Ninety-eight percent of participants said they feel more prepared to co-parent as a result of the program. When asked what they will do differently as a result of the program, participants commented, “Listen and think before I respond” and “Always ask myself if this is a good choice for my children and/or how it will affect them.”
- OSU Extension provides support to those involved in the home processing of food by answering consumer calls and by conducting pressure canner testing and home food preservation workshops. These are great opportunities to talk about the steps needed to ensure the safety of home food preservation. Seven pressure canner testing events and many one-on-one, in-office tests were conducted for more than 100 canner units. More than two-thirds of canner units tested needed new parts or needed to have adjustments made during the processing procedure. Thirteen food preservation workshops, with 131 participants, were held on topics including canning basics; dehydrating; and canning and freezing meats, soups, and stews.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- Holmes County had 30 community 4-H Clubs, with 453 club members enrolled in nearly 875 projects in 2015. One hundred ninety-five adult advisors and committee members volunteered to provide leadership to these members. The value of the volunteer service these volunteers bring to Holmes County is nearly \$200,000. Goal-setting, leadership and following through on commitments are the life skills that members gain by completing project requirements.
- Twenty-nine eighth grade through twelfth grade Holmes County youth took advantage of the advanced leadership development opportunities available through Junior Fair Board. Participants developed skills such as public speaking, personal accountability, public relations and representation, and service to the community through fair preparations during the year and plan enactment during fair week. Every Junior Fair show was conducted and recorded by Junior Fair Board members, demonstrating the skills developed through participation in Junior Fair Board.
- Providing youth livestock exhibitors with education about the proper care and management of their market animals was the focus of five Quality Assurance Training workshops. More than 300 members representing FFA and 4-H Clubs across the county attended the workshops to build management and evaluation skills by keeping accurate records for fair projects. The success was evident

in that none of the nearly 400 Drug Use Notification Forms required to show at the fair were filled out incorrectly. This represents a major improvement over forms turned in during past years.

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- The eighth grade classes of Hiland Middle School and West Holmes Middle School, assisted by many community volunteers, participated in Real Money, Real World. Two hundred eighty-five students attended the in-class lessons and hands-on simulation in which the students had to pay for the necessities in life with a predetermined salary. Participants documented learning in a variety of areas related to money and their future. Student comments ranged from “It helped me see what expenses my Mom and Dad have to put up with” to “I learned that life is really expensive.”
- The nationally recognized ServSafe Food Handler Program was offered for the sixteenth year. In 2015, 21 participants attended the 20-hour Level 2 (Food Service Manager) training. Nineteen of those individuals taking the standardized certification test passed, with an average score of 86 percent. Level 1 (Safe Food Handler) training was attended by 30 Holmes County food service employees. An average 13 percent increase from pre- to post-test results indicates that this four-hour food safety program impacts how these employees handle the food served to our local residents and visitors. Participants learned about foodborne illness; preventing cross-contamination; utilizing time and temperature control effectively; and cleaning, sanitizing, and managing for pests.

Holmes County receives \$30,906 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.