

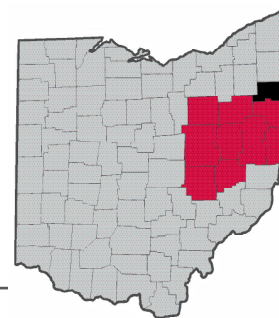
2015 County Highlights

Mahoning County

Crossroads Extension Education and Research Area

490 South Broad Street, Canfield, Ohio 44406-1604

Phone: 330-533-5538 mahoning.osu.edu



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Our community nutrition programs collaborated with 88 agencies and support organizations in Mahoning County.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) continued to grow during 2015, with the hiring of two additional SNAP-Ed program assistants and one SNAP-Ed coordinator. A total of 4,812 youth and 497 limited-income adults participated in 398 programs conducted in Mahoning County to improve both their physical activity and their use of MyPlate to make food choices. Pre- and post-evaluations with adult participants found that 85 percent are confident they can buy healthy foods on a budget, and 75 percent have improved their intake of fruit once daily.
- Obesity, poor nutrition and physical inactivity disproportionately affect minority and low-income citizens. Of the estimated 233,869 residents in Mahoning County, 11.2 percent of families with children live in poverty. In an effort to reduce this disparity and improve the health and well-being of Ohioans, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) teaches an eight-lesson nutrition education series to low-income families with children. EFNEP, funded by USDA-NIFA, contributed \$60,000 this year to our county, funding 1.5 FTE staff in the OSU Extension office. In 2015, a total of 994 family members were impacted by EFNEP. The 151 graduates significantly increased knowledge and improved behaviors in diet quality (95 percent), food resource management (85 percent) and food safety (63 percent), resulting in Mahoning County residents making healthier choices.
- Chronic diseases are largely preventable through a healthy lifestyle involving a balanced diet and regular physical activity. Over half of graduates increased their physical activity levels and fruit and vegetable consumption upon completing EFNEP.
- EFNEP reached 243 youth in grades 2–12. After completing six lessons (66 lessons), youth reported significant increases in knowledge and positive behavior changes in areas of diet

quality (87 percent), food safety (40 percent) and physical activity (53 percent).

- Using social media, OSU Extension led three six-week “Live Healthy Live Well” online wellness challenges with over 452 adults from Mahoning County participating in 2015. Twice-weekly email messages encouraged participants to increase their physical activity, improve their diet, purchase local foods and use coping techniques to reduce stress. Evaluations reported 79 percent of participants adopted one or more of the recommended practices to reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases, and 95 percent maintained or lost weight. Participants commonly reported improved habits after completing the wellness challenges.
- To meet the demand for safe food preservation, “Preserving the Harvest” workshops were held monthly during the growing season. Post-evaluations from 46 participants indicated increased knowledge of low-acid and high-acid foods and increased confidence in water bathing and pressure canning.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- There were 1,160 youth ages 5–18 who were members of Mahoning County 4-H in 2015. These youth participated in 55 community clubs, led by 288 trained volunteers.
- In its fifth year in Mahoning County, the National 4-H Mentoring Program offered opportunities for 80 mentor/mentee relationships to increase the developmental assets of youth, ages 10–14, and their families.
- Twenty-eight 4-H teens gained leadership skills through training and then applied those skills as counselors for 16 4-H Cloverbuds, ages 5–8, at 4-H Day Camp and for 67 youth, ages 8–14, at our resident camp at 4-H Camp Whitewood.
- In cooperation with the Mahoning County Juvenile Court, five 4-H teens served as peer instructors to teach traffic safety classes through 4-H CARTEENS. Using such strategies as driving simulators to teach about the dangers



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Empowerment Through Education

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

of texting and driving, 4-H member taught strategies for safer driving to 143 juvenile traffic offenders.

- The skills that can be learned from growing a vegetable garden range from leadership to responsibility to a feeling of self-accomplishment. OSU Extension offered several programs to increase vegetable gardening programs in Mahoning County. Sixteen volunteers and teachers participated in a School Garden Workshop, where 100 percent of them stated they would implement their new knowledge in a setting with youth. Thirty volunteers participated in a Community Garden Workshop, where they learned the pros and cons of starting a new garden, versus joining an existing venture. Nine teams of volunteers led 116 youth in completion of a vegetable-growing experience through our Good Natured Garden Partners Program.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Eighty-seven private applicators were recertified for their Ohio Department of Agriculture pesticide applicator licenses. Participants rated the program high in all aspects, commenting that the most important things they learned were the importance of surfactants, the interaction of water with chemicals, the importance of controlling spotted wing Drosophila and the importance of using correct measuring devices.
- To comply with new fertilizer application laws, Mahoning County offered three sessions during which 109 farmers gained the new Ohio Agricultural Fertilizer Certification. Sixty-five percent of participants stated “I will change my nutrient management practices as a result of this meeting.”
- A First Detector Training was held to increase awareness of invasive species. Participants said they improved their overall knowledge of invasive species and would use their new skills to keep the First Detector Training in their “toolbox” when working daily in the field. Participants also stated they would survey local areas and monitor for the aforementioned pests.
- Sixty active Master Gardener Volunteers led programs and events throughout Mahoning County. Nearly 1,000 personal questions were answered through the Plant and Pest Diagnostic Clinic, operated by these volunteers. Master Gardener Volunteers developed a new “Coffee with the Master Gardener Volunteers” series, during which 243 gardeners gained new skills in topics from soils and amendments to perennials and pollinators.
- From urban farmers to traditional farmers, classes were held to increase skills in crop production. Two hands-on fruit tree pruning clinics were held, during which 98 participants improved their knowledge about pruning their own trees for increased production and disease reduction. Twelve farmers gained new skills in plug production at our Plasticulture Strawberry Field Day.
- Bimonthly naturalist programs attracted 90 community members to learn ways to attract wildlife, improve local wetlands and adopt nature-friendly practices on their land.

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- The nationally recognized ServSafe Food Handler Program was offered to 20 participants who attended the two-day program. All 20 of the participants successfully passed the standardized national certification exam, with an average score of 95 percent. Four of the participants were opening new food establishments in Mahoning County including an Asian restaurant, a barbeque restaurant, a family-style diner and a food truck.
- From farm-direct marketing classes to programs on low-interest grants and loans to emergency preparedness, hundreds of farmers gained the skills to take their businesses to the next level during 2015.
- Business development programs were held in conjunction with the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation. Over 80 participants enrolled in the two eight-week programs. When asked if the classes improved their success in regards to opening their businesses, 100 percent of participants listed positive comments.
- Hundreds of farm businesses attended our monthly Lunch-and-Learns, during which the following topics were discussed: urban farming, farm estate planning, farm taxes and genetically modified organisms. The trend for participants was an increase in knowledge gained for every topic, including an 87.5 percent gain of knowledge relating to farm estate planning.

Mahoning County receives \$75,151 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.