

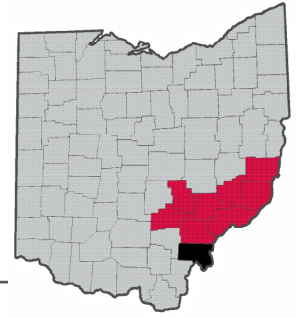
2015 County Highlights

Meigs County

Buckeye Hills Extension Education and Research Area

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- The Meigs County Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) had a total of 804 direct contacts in 2015. These direct contacts received programming in the areas of MyPlate, vegetables and fruits, food shopping, and more. Twelve classes were single lessons, and 74 were part of a series. Participants were surveyed, and 76 percent indicated that they were confident they could make at least one positive change as a result of the program. One hundred percent of youth and 71 percent of adults stated that they plan to meet physical activity goals. Some of the agencies that have signed partnership agreements with OSU Extension to provide SNAP-Ed classes include Job and Family Services, Meigs County Council on Aging, Summer Food Service Program, Help Me Grow, Meigs After-School Program, Carleton Schools/Meigs Industries, Athens Meigs Educational Service Center, and Heart of the Valley Head Start.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- In 2015, Meigs County 4-H reached more than 900 youth in Meigs County through traditional clubs, camp, school enrichment programs and special interest groups. A 2015 graduate stated, "4-H has played a major role in shaping me into an active and outgoing leader in my community." Research from Tufts University supports this young man, reporting that 4-H members are four times more likely to make contributions to their communities and two times more likely to be civically active than their counterparts.
- Camp offers youth a safe place to make new friends, try new things and have lots of fun. In 2015, 41 campers and six counselors from Meigs County attended Canter's Cave 4-H Camp, enjoying nature hikes, canoeing, swimming, crafts, line dancing, campfire ceremonies and candle-lighting ceremonies at the conclusion of camp. As part of her position, the Meigs County 4-H educator now serves as program director for the State 4-H Special Needs Camp.

This entails directing the two-night, three-day camp tailored for youth with multiple handicaps and securing resources for the continuation of the program. In 2015, grant funding was obtained to allow the camp to purchase several motorized paddle boats to give campers a chance to take aquatic science to a whole new level by exploring Engle Lake. More than half of the campers had never been on a boat, and one camper stated, "Boating helps you be calm and learn to take charge as the captain of your boat. You have to learn to be a good leader as a captain and I want to be that one day!"

- After-school programming is an increasing part of the 4-H schedule. In 2015, 238 Meigs County youth in two schools participated in after-school programs where the 4-H educator played a role in providing interactive learning activities. Recent research on the effectiveness of after-school programs prepared with the support of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation reported that youth who participate in high-quality after-school programs are more likely to increase math test scores (52 percent more likely than uninvolved peers) and classroom work habits (35 percent more likely); reduce misconduct in the classroom (66 percent less likely to get into trouble); and work better as part of a team (21 percent more likely to increase social skills with peers.) These are skills that translate into college and the workplace, depending on each student's career goals.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Thirty-five attendees participated in the annual holiday program in either our morning or evening session. Participants were educated on the benefits of living Christmas trees and where to purchase them locally. Planting living Christmas trees has many benefits including local business support, oxygen production, wildlife habitat support, improved air quality and reduction in landfill use. Participants were taught how to care for their tree before, during and after the holidays. The program also focused on tree species characteristics and what to look for when



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- selecting a living tree. Attendees were also given a living Christmas tree resource guide, a quick fact sheet and an opportunity to view a living Christmas tree display
- Twenty-six residents participated in Pesticide Applicator Recertification. Twenty-three participants successfully renewed their pesticide license, and three came to observe the class. A county pesticide certification test was also administered, during which four local residents received their pesticide applicator license. Meigs County Extension was also involved in providing education on the new Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training. The statewide training was developed in response to Governor Kasich signing the Ohio Agriculture Nutrient Management Bill. This bill was designed to address agriculture nutrient runoff into Ohio waterways as well as the algae problems in Grand Lake St. Marys and Lake Erie. The bill created a new education and certification program that will give farmers additional information about fertilizer and nutrient use best practices. Five Meigs County farmers received their fertilizer certification in 2015.
 - Meigs County Extension has been involved in school gardening at three local schools. Two school garden programs were implemented at Meigs Primary and Eastern High Schools. Lessons on food production, soil readiness and plant development were delivered to participating students. The first of the school gardening programs consisted of 12 raised beds where students raised flowers, spinach, lettuce, summer squash, snap peas, cucumbers and zucchini over a six week period. Students had the opportunity to sample the fruits and vegetables that were grown in the beds. The second of the school gardening programs consisted of growing cherry tomatoes from seed at Eastern High School's greenhouse over a five-week period. Each student was able to take home two plants using large containers donated by a local farmer. The reach of Extension was extended in this programming area through work with the Garden Club at Meigs Intermediate School. Education on extending the growing season, soil sampling and planning garden plots was conducted as part of the program. Students provided a token of thanks for volunteers who contributed more than \$2,500 in donated time and resources to up to 40 youth attending monthly.
 - Along with the educational programs, 124 residents were assisted with one-on-one questions concerning agriculture, horticulture, entomology, forestry, pest control and pesticides. Over 20 house and farm visits were conducted as well. Also, over 40 soil test reports were interpreted with fertilizer recommendations for 22 county residents.

- Over 55 homeowners, landscapers, public employees and conservationists from three states attended Native Plants to Know and Grow, which emphasized the need to understand native plants, how to use them effectively, how to use them in the landscape, and how they interact with other plants and animals in an ecosystem. The event is offered to the community with support from local professionals in the field.

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- In addition to preparing youth for successful careers, which will impact the future of the county, youth also contribute a more immediate impact as part of their 4-H participation. During the 2015 Meigs County Fair, 203 4-H and FFA members received over \$250,000 by selling their project animals. These young people work with their animals for several months in order to learn compassion, recordkeeping skills and knowledge of animal husbandry.

Meigs County receives \$53,780 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.