

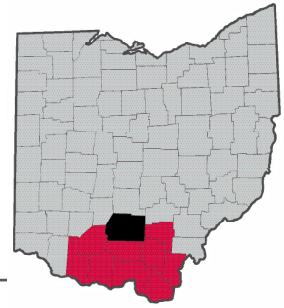
2015 County Highlights

ROSS County

Ohio Valley Extension Education and Research Area

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PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- Almost 25 percent of Ohio's serious crimes are committed by 15- to 19-year-olds. Research shows that youth who volunteer just one hour a week are 50 percent less likely to abuse drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, or engage in destructive behavior. In 2015, 126 teen leaders were actively involved in 4-H as camp counselors, Junior Fair Board members, Junior Leaders Club members. Also in 2015, 4-H CARTEENS instructors provided over 9,520 hours of volunteer service this year.
- In 2015, camp counselor training provided 54 teens with 24 hours of training in youth development, leadership, program-planning, teaching, risk management and communication skills. During training, the teens participated in activities that helped them understand their roles as camp counselors. The teens also learned to establish reliable work habits. Ultimately, the teens hosted a successful camping experience for 321 campers. In doing so, the teens enabled themselves to face and accept the demands of continued education and/or the workforce.
- Ross County 4-H went into two local schools' fourth and fifth grade classrooms to deliver STEM-based programming. Sixty-four youth received in-depth experiential learning opportunities geared around science and engineering concepts. This program helped increase agriculture literacy and career opportunities in elementary youth. Partial funding was granted by the Ohio 4-H Foundation.
- Due to the increase of a second Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) program assistant in late 2014, SNAP-Ed programs geared toward limited-income adult audiences were able to expand to include youth programs. This effort allowed OSU Extension to reach over 2,000 unduplicated youth in Ross County through a combination of programs at schools and at summer feeding sites. Over 270 programs were held at Chillicothe City Elementary Schools, Adena Elementary, and Pickaway-Ross Career and Technology Center during the 2014 to 2015

school year. All youth participated in a three-part series program about nutrition and physical activity. Fifty programs were also presented in the county by the Summer Food Service Program. In post-series evaluations, youth reported increasing behavior changes in the areas of physical activity and eating foods from most MyPlate food groups.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Farmers needed assistance in selecting the correct 2014 Farm Bill program options to minimize risk and maximize income. OSU Extension provided Farm Bill education programs and individual consultations for farmers and landowners on the Farm Bill election decisions. FSA reported approximately 98 percent of all farms elected the Agricultural Risk Coverage County Option (ARC-CO) as demonstrated by OSU Extension as the preferred option based on known information at the time. This will result in approximately \$3,263,400 in payments to farmers for the 2014 corn crop based on electing into the ARC-CO program of the 2014 Farm Bill.
- Due to lower grain prices, it is critical to future farm profitability to correctly understand the risk capacity of the farm and the available grain marketing tools. Sixty-three farmers from Ross and surrounding counties participated in a five-week grain marketing course delivered through distance learning education. Feedback from participants indicated that they learned how to develop a grain marketing plan based on the financial risk capacity of their individual farm businesses.
- An issue receiving greater attention in recent years is farm field nutrient losses into the watershed. Nutrient management education was provided to 31 farmers in Ross County in 2015. As a result of the education, farmers meet the requirements of Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training (FACT) requirements in Ohio. Research from the University of Delaware indicated that respondents estimated



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that nutrient management training increased their profits by \$7.49 per acre, resulting in a \$185,752 Ross County gain.

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- OSU Extension worked with local food producers to create a printed directory of farmers' markets and road-side stands where people could go to purchase local foods. This was distributed at the Ross County Fair and through several other outlets including the Ross County Chamber of Commerce and Kingston National Bank. Feedback indicated that the directory was appreciated by the consumers, and initial feedback from our local food producers showed increased customers at their retail stands.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) teaches an eight-lesson nutrition education series to low-income families with children. A new EFNEP program assistant started in 2015 and quickly established partnerships with the Recovery Council and Alvis House. In 2015, a total of 68 families were impacted by EFNEP, with a total reach of 243 family members. The 35 graduates increased their knowledge and improved their behaviors in diet quality (89 percent), food resource management (86 percent), and food safety (43 percent), resulting in 23 percent of graduates running out of food less often each month.
- SNAP-Ed focuses on teaching limited-income Ross County families and youth food budgeting, nutrition and meal management strategies. Over 1,500 adults participated in 175 classes focused on MyPlate; increasing consumption of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains; and eating breakfast. Post-test surveys showed that participants had improved their nutrition and food-budgeting habits in the areas of eating plant-based protein foods, using food labels to make better choices, and planning meals ahead of time to save money and make better choices.
- In 2015, 273 adult club advisors received The Ohio State University Child Abuse and Neglect Training. This training covers types of abuse, indicators of abuse and reporting practices. Our 4-H advisors will be able to better protect themselves and will be prepared to advocate for county youth within the 4-H program and beyond.
- Ohio 4-H advisor volunteers have been trained with the Occasional Quantity Cooks curriculum. This curriculum focuses on safe food handling, safe food storage and safe food preparation techniques to prevent potential foodborne illnesses from food served at Extension or other events.

Over 30 people participated in home food preservation trainings and had their pressure canners tested for accuracy by the OSU Extension Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) educator during 2015. A recent study at The Ohio State University showed that the average cost of foodborne illness to Ross County could be \$15 million to \$27 million per year. Preventing these costs through education is important for Ross County families.

- In 2015, Ross County was selected to pilot the Cooking Matters program, a six-week series that focused on shopping smarter to make healthier choices and cooking tasty, nutritious meals. In 2015, the SNAP-Ed program assistants, the OSU Extension FCS educator, and the OSU Extension office information associate worked together during spring and summer to team-teach three times the "Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters" series. This series empowers low-income families to stretch their food budgets to create healthy meals they prepare themselves. The United Way of Ross County and federal/state partners sponsored this program at no cost to Ross County. Thirty-six people graduated from Cooking Matters and reported making significant changes to their nutrition and budgeting habits in the areas of using food labels, selecting lean and low-fat meats, and eating whole-grain food products. Participants frequently commented that Cooking Matters helped them increase the amount and types of vegetables they were eating, and helped them increase the use of food labels to make better food choices.

Ross County receives \$175,000 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.