

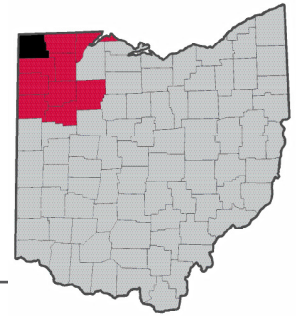
2015 County Highlights

Williams County

Maumee Valley Extension Education and Research Area

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ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- The Williams County OSU Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) educator taught 140 area farmers about soil health and water quality through hosting and teaching four Ohio Department of Agriculture Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training meetings. The certification program covered three areas: water quality, soil testing and fertility recommendations. The section on water quality covered the blue-green bacteria bloom *Microcystis* and the toxin release microcystin found in the Western Lake Erie Basin. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), microcystin at levels greater than that of 1 ppb is dangerous and a health issue in drinking water. Participants learned that phosphorous from either fertilizer or livestock waste is helping to contribute to the microcystin bloom. The next section stressed the importance of soil sampling in determining soil fertility and health; different sampling methods (grids, zones, or 20-acre whole fields) were presented. Getting reliable soil samples is important in determining the correct amount of nutrients needed to grow crops economically and environmentally. The final topic addressed the updated fertility recommendation found in the *Tri-State Fertility Guide*. Examples allowed farmers a better understanding of how to use the fertility guide.
- In other agronomic programs, the Williams County Extension office in cooperation with the Williams County SWCD hosted two cover crop workshops with Jim Hoorman and Dave Brandt. These workshops covered the benefits cover crops can bring to soil health and the environment. More than 155 farmers were in attendance.
- The Williams County ANR educator hosted a meeting in collaboration with the Williams County Farm Bureau for residents to learn about water quality issues from Dr. Karen Mancl, professor with The Ohio State University Department of Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering. A tour of a local wastewater treatment plant and a water treatment plant

provided Dr. Mancl the opportunity to present information about the water quality coming from these plants and how these plants protect our drinking water.

- In cooperation with the Williams County SWCD and The Ohio State University's Fork to Table grant, a tile monitoring program has been started. Data from five area farmers' fields has been collected for the purpose of evaluating tillage, fertilizing and cropping pattern effects on phosphorous runoff.
- The Williams County Extension office in cooperation with the Williams County SWCD hosted three natural resources workshops: "What Can We Do With Your Woods," "Introduction to Wildlife Management," and a pond clinic. The pond clinic, which is offered annually, is in response to requests from the citizens of Williams County. Both agencies received questions concerning possible algal blooms in farm ponds, and both agencies educated residents about how to respond to the possible blooms. Residents were also educated about other pond management concerns such as fish populations and weed control.
- Gardening—whether landscaping for beauty around the home or growing vegetables for better health—is still an important activity in Williams County. In response to many questions, the Williams County ANR educator organized the Williams County Master Gardener program. The alumni members, under the direction of the ANR educator and the volunteer coordinator, organized this year's calendar for continuing education opportunities, trips and work hours. Through their efforts, both groups gave back to the county over 360 hours of volunteer time valued at \$8,305 using federal estimates of the hourly rate of volunteer time.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- The 4-H Youth Development program coordinator enrolled and trained 128 adult volunteers to organize and manage 25 community 4-H Clubs and serve as role models to the youth enrolled in 4-H. Thirteen new volunteers completed



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background checks and interviews to be accepted as new 4-H advisors. All volunteer advisors participated in at least one workshop to learn club management skills. Advisors also learned about youth development to enhance their volunteer service, and they also received Child Protection Training according to The Ohio State University Policy 1.50.

- Williams County Junior Camp engaged 100 youth ages 9–13 and 38 youth ages 5–8 in Cloverbud Camp at 4-H Camp Palmer. Participants learned life skills for independent living with the activities and lesson plans being created by the 4-H Youth Development program coordinator and 31 camp counselors. Teens ages 14–18 were recruited and trained to serve as camp counselors and role models.
- Quality Assurance Training, a joint effort of the 4-H Youth Development program coordinator and the ANR educator, was completed by 372 Williams County Junior Fair youth. Participants learned about proper recordkeeping and livestock drug use practices to produce marketable animals and animal byproducts for human consumption.
- Three hundred fifty-eight Williams County Junior Fair youth enrolled in livestock projects completed an animal Skillathon station during annual livestock interviews. As a result, youth were more prepared for showmanship questions at the county fair. Results indicated that 52 percent of the participants received a 70 percent or higher on the Skillathon.
- Annual 4-H club enrollment increased to 616 youth who were recruited with the help of teen ambassadors and volunteers. These youth enrolled in a total of 1,600 4-H projects. An additional 609 youth were reached through special interest activities conducted by OSU Extension professionals. Youth learned life skills and subject matter in team-building, agronomy, livestock husbandry, safety and natural resources.
- North Central School District, community volunteers, and Williams County Extension conducted Real Money, Real World for a total of 68 students in grades nine and twelve. This activity allowed youth to select a career and live off of regional average income rates while they made real-life decisions associated with housing, eating, travel, family life and other unexpected expenses when living on their own. More than 85 percent of the participants reported that they had a better understanding of budgets and financial planning upon completion of the hands-on simulation.