



# Knox County

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## 2008 County Highlights

### Strengthening Families and Communities

- **Parenting and Child Care** continue to be a focus of programming. The principles of Conscious Discipline and other leading research-based programs are utilized with these audiences to increase the number of positive solutions parents and caregivers have available during stressful parenting moments. Seventy-two parents and caregivers report increasing knowledge and aspire to use more positive techniques with the children in their care.
- **Safely preserving food and utilizing** fresh, local foods have been the emphasis of several programs, many phone calls, and a variety of media releases. Thirty-seven people are utilizing new recipes and preservation techniques. Ten people have become certified in **ServSafe**, the National Restaurant Certification for food service personnel, and over 100 people have increased their knowledge regarding food safety, preservation, and preparation of foods.
- Money management and budget planning continue to be a concern for individuals and families. "**Knox Saves**" was implemented for the first time in Knox County in 2008. Home buyer seminars, New Start programs, one-on-one budget assistance and the Saves program, encouraged hundreds of Knox County citizens to use their money wisely. Seventeen individuals improved their personal budget skills.
- Over 135 Knox County residents increased their awareness of the impact of the sun on their skin and their health. One specific program for local Hispanic residents resulted in their commitment to use sunscreen and increased their awareness of the causes of skin cancer.
- **Elected and appointed officials** in a three-county area increased their awareness of ethics laws, sunshine laws, zoning, and government finance. Evaluations show that at least 20% not only increased their knowledge but planned to utilize the knowledge and share it with others.

### Advancing Employment and Income Opportunities

- **Gettin' Ahead and Steppin' Up** are the programs utilized for low-income young adults aspiring to increase their personal resources. Twelve local, sometimes homeless, adults created plans to increase their personal resources. Two have completely succeeded by obtaining and maintaining employment, establishing their own residence, and continue to create new goals. The remaining 10 are aspiring and working towards their goals. Several steps to success have been reached by these 10.

- Developed **Quality Assurance** curriculum that was used to train over 152 Farmers Market vendors. Fifty percent of consumers surveyed indicated that they felt more secure about the quality and safety of the products they purchased because of the training.
- The **Pumpkins On Parade** committee of the Master Gardener volunteer program organized a three-day event held in conjunction with the Brown Family Environmental Center's Harvest Festival. The committee received more than \$1,600 in donations and in-kind gifts for the event, which attracted an estimated 1,500 people.
- Provided leadership and training to 22 active **Master Gardener Volunteers**. During 2008 these volunteers contributed over 544 hours of service. The estimated value of the volunteers' time was \$10,613.

### Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment

- Four commercial produce growers participated in **vegetable variety trials**. Two experimental varieties of field tomatoes were grown and data on disease resistance and yields were collected by each grower. Initial results indicate that one experimental variety of tomato yielded 15% more crop with a potential increase in income of \$1,500/acre. Results will be posted on the county web site, printed in newsletters, and shared in grower meetings this winter.
- Thirty-five livestock producers from eight counties attended the eight-week **Grass Finishing Short Course** this winter. Participants in the course market 497 head of beef and 57 head of lambs through direct marketing. Taking the average value participants reported receiving for their direct marketing of those livestock, the course participants represented \$1,041,868 in direct marketed meat sales. Over 95% of the participants felt that information learned in the course will impact their bottom line.
- Co-developed a program called **Ruminant Livestock: Facing New Economic Realities**. This two-part program was held here and at three other locations across the state with over 280 producers attending. It was designed to address the changes in the feed complex producers were facing and give them various options on how to adapt.
- **The Ohio Pasture Measurement Project** is a program where livestock producers across the state are measuring at least one pasture field once a week to determine forage growth. Currently there are 17 producers across the state reporting their results weekly. Results are posted weekly on the Ohio Forages blog at <http://ohioforages.blogspot.com>.

- **2008 Central Ohio Agronomy School: “The Nuts and Bolts about Corn and Soybean Production”**—A six-week in-depth series (January 21–February 27) on critical agronomic production topics. This program was very well received. A total of 58 farmers from 6 counties attended each session of the 2008 Central Ohio Agronomy School. These producers reported production of more than 9 million bushels of corn, 3 million bushels of soybeans, 358,000 bushels of wheat, and 12,000 tons of alfalfa. These producers were responsible for adding more than \$52 million in annual sales to their local economies. Results from end-of-program evaluations show 93% of the participants plan to implement changes to their operation based upon information learned at this workshop. 100% of the respondents would recommend this school to others.
- **Data Management, Analysis and Decision Making**—This three-day comprehensive, hands-on workshop was designed to provide the most up-to-date GPS, GIS, and internet management technologies. To date, five workshops have been targeted to producers and crop consultants throughout Ohio. Evaluations from the first two workshops show the participants represented more than 95,000 acres of corn, soybeans, and wheat with total average gross receipts of \$42 million. Respondents indicated an anticipated savings of \$5 to \$10 an acre based on knowledge gained in this workshop. These savings result in increased revenues of \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 annually.
- **Computerized Farm Record Keeping with Quicken**—A Self-Study Manual. This manual has been updated for 2008 and is available online. Past versions of this manual have been used by farmers in 31 states and 4 foreign countries.
- **Pesticide Applicator Training**—82 private pesticide applicators improved their knowledge, attitudes, and application practices by attending pesticide training classes. Completion of this training allows these individuals to purchase, apply, and use restricted use pesticides.

## Preparing Youth for Success

- **Knox County 4-H**—1,180 youth participated in 83 traditional community clubs and activities, and completed more than 1,930 4-H projects. The program was supported by 260 volunteers. They demonstrated a gain in life skills at judging and speaking contests, and through club leadership and citizenship.
- **School enrichment experiences** (Acorns to Oak, Acres of Adventure, Go Plants, Pizza Garden, Team Up for Good Nutrition, The Incredible Egg, and Weather Together) were presented to 912 youth throughout the county, which is comprised of five different school

districts. That was for a total of 39 classrooms along with the YMCA pre-school.

- **Junior 4-H Camp**—151 4-H members and counselors attended the five-day camp at 4-H Camp Ohio. They participated in adventure activities, crafts, shooting sports, living history, and nature study.
- **Jump Into Foods and Fitness**—This before-school program at Pleasant Street Elementary School provides students from grades K–5 with information on nutrition, exercise, and a healthy snack before entering the classroom. Partners from OSU Extension (including teen 4-H Health Ambassadors), the Knox County Health Department, and Pleasant Street School continued this for the 2007–08 school year.
- **Power to the Sixth**—This afterschool program for sixth grade students at Mount Vernon Middle School provides students with positive leisure activities on Wednesdays. In its sixth year, the program utilizes 4-H and Girl Scout teen and adult volunteers, averaging 32 youth each week.
- **Operation: Military Kids (OMK)**—April 4–6, 2008, a National Guard Family Readiness Conference (Columbus) was held that was assisted by four adult volunteers from Knox County. One hundred military youth ages 12–18 went to 4-H Camp Ohio assisted by teen and adult volunteers from Knox County. OMK Camp at Kelley’s Island was held for 164 military kids. Eight youth counselors and three adults from the Knox County 4-H program volunteered as camp staff members.
- **Master Gardener volunteers** co-lead the effort to create a **vegetable judging contest** for junior exhibitors at the county fair. Judging materials were developed and presented in a pre-fair workshop. Eighty-three percent of those attending increased the number of vegetables they could identify correctly and improved their ability to place individual classes. Four placed in the top eight during the actual competition.
- More than 300 high school students participated in **“Real Money Real World.”** More than 75% saw the importance of thinking through their choices on their future.
- Assisted in securing \$2,400 to organize a two-day **Pasture to Plate** training seminar for about 28 elementary and secondary educators. Those trained developed lesson plans from the materials and committed to utilize the lesson plan in classrooms to teach over 588 students during the 2008–2009 school year.
- Secured \$20,680 for creating **recycling curricula** for elementary students. Recycling principles were taught to over 1,200 elementary students in each of the county’s five school districts in 2008.

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