



Mercer County

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2008 County Highlights

Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment

- To purchase and apply restricted-use chemicals, producers must obtain a license, which requires them to pass an exam. Pesticide Applicator Training for the exam was conducted, which assisted producers in understanding the material content. Written responses from eight individuals indicated (“agreed” or “strongly agreed”) the training assisted them in passing the exam.
- The Crop Observation and Recommendation Network (C.O.R.N.) newsletter is a weekly publication during the planting/growing/harvesting seasons, which is a collaboration between state specialist and county educators. The county educator was an active participant in the collaboration and served as editor for four weeks. Written evaluations indicated producers reduced the cost of production per acre and increased yield per acre based on information received in the C.O.R.N. newsletter.
- Many chemical companies promote the use of fungicides, claiming the producer will increase yields by a certain number of bushels. OSU Extension promotes the use of scouting fields to determine if the fungicides are needed. The educator met with a producer on a weekly basis for approximately a month to assist in scouting his wheat fields for disease thresholds. The producer felt that scouting was much more economical than just applying a fungicide.
- In cooperation with Mercer County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Farm Service Agency, a monthly Ag Breakfast was conducted. This allowed individuals to network and be informed about community and Ag issues. Many who attended on a regular basis express positive comments about the program.
- A Soybean Sentinel plot (a monitoring system) was used to determine if soybean rust was present in the county that would indicate producers would need to apply a fungicide. Bases on the monitoring system no rust was found in Mercer and surrounding counties; therefore, producers saved money on fungicide applications.

Preparing Youth for Success

- Practicing life skills that will enhance future job opportunities is a focus of the camp counselor staff development program. Teens are trained to develop organizational and teamwork skills by working together through the process of planning, conducting, and evaluating

educational programs geared for 9–12 year old youth attending Harbor Point 4-H camp. A record number 316 Mercer County youth and teens participated in the resident camping program this past summer.

- Through a partnership with Wright State University Lake Campus, 18 future community and business leaders are putting learning into practice as these college students complete a capstone project in conjunction with Mercer County 4-H. The group is working toward several facility improvement projects at the 4-H campgrounds, in which the students find the money, expertise, communicate with local lay and community leaders, and work together as a team to successfully complete the overall project. The improved facilities will also enhance future use of the grounds for additional recreational and educational activities within the local community.
- Although a former 4-H member’s life was cut way too short by a tragic accident, the importance of his 4-H participation during his life was evident. Numerous 4-H awards and photos were displayed at his viewing. Many times it is difficult to measure the impact that a long-term developmental program like 4-H has on a person’s life, but when his mother said to me that evening, “4-H was the most positive influence in his life as he was growing up,” I knew that for him and countless other youth, 4-H does and is making a huge difference in their lives.
- During their first year as an organization, the Wright State Lake Campus Collegiate 4-H chapter’s members were immersed in practicing future job skills as these college students taught 3rd–5th grade pupils twice each month as a part of the after school enrichment program held at Celina Schools. This program, geared for academically challenged students, eagerly welcomed the collegiate 4-H members who, in addition to providing homework assistance, also served as positive role models to the students.
- Twenty-four 5 X 7 art reproductions. Horses, rocks, snow. Assemble them together into a large format and what do you see? Horses, rocks, snow ... but wait! When you view it from a distance, it spells “Hide and Seek” (Artist, Bev Doolittle). Junior Fair Board members used newly assimilated skills of mediation, objective observation, and self-evaluation to produce and monitor the many shows, demonstrations, and competitions of a successful county fair.

- The incredible, edible egg. They say it's good for you, many say it's tasty—but how many people can tell you how strong an egg is? Stand four eggs on end with the assistance of modeling clay, and ask a group of people, no matter the age, “How can we determine how strong an egg is?” It is amazing to watch the group communicate to determine the process of methodically planning and experimenting to find the answer to that question. Opportunities to discuss architecture, nutrition, physics, and chickens abound as people interact. There is no age limit as excitement builds when more and more weight is placed upon the upstanding eggs. (Our record currently stands at nearly 24 pounds per egg.)
- Local, independent and hardworking! Food, Fashion and Design Board members visited local entrepreneurs to learn the fine points of pursuing a dream. “Visions,” a once small, and now internationally known awards design and production company has grown from a garage business to a multi-million dollar production facility. “Cabinetry by Ebbing” has grown from a small woodworking company to a producer of luxury case goods. From “Formica” to granite and quartz, this local cabinetry company now places product in a multi-state area. In addition to exploring employment opportunities in the community, members also explored the finer side of food preparation, including developing sausage recipes, and producing and tasting the results.

Strengthening Families and Communities

- The incidence of diabetes is increasing nationwide. The Family and Consumer Sciences educator conducted the OSU Extension Signature program “Dining With Diabetes” for diabetics, caregivers, and people at-risk for the disease. The program was co-taught with the Certified Diabetes Educator from Mercer Health Hospital. As a result of the program, participants reported exercising more, consuming smaller portions, counting carbohydrates, and reading food labels more frequently. They

reported eating healthier plus their families were making healthy lifestyle changes as a result of the program.

- Living with chronic pain affects people with the disease as well as those around them. The two Healthy-U Chronic Pain Management series were co-taught with the Mercer County Council on Aging. Participants reported using the pain management techniques taught in the series, continued action plans to make positive healthy lifestyle changes, increased the frequency of exercising, and made improved healthy food choices.
- Assessments with the DermScan unit were conducted at various community activities to highlight the awareness of early skin cancer detection. The unit assesses a person's face for any skin damage caused by the sun. This activity created the opportunity to educate the public on the use of sunscreen, hats, and general sun protection to reduce the risk of skin cancers in children and adults.
- Everyone expects to be served safe food in a clean environment. Extended training was conducted for area food service managers through the ServSafe® division of the National Restaurant Association. As a result of the training, certified managers are providing safer food and establishments to the public and to residents in health care facilities.
- Happy teeth, strong muscles, good eyes, and nice skin. Five-year-olds “help their bodies in every way by eating all kinds of food every day” as they explore foods by color, texture, taste, food group, and variety in end product. Building their knowledge base month by month, these children, among many food explorations, “drank a pumpkin” (pumpkin soup), ate orange juice (gelatin squares) and sipped sassafras juice as taste testers in new ways to try both familiar and unfamiliar foods. Through encouragement and examples from peers, high school visitors, and teachers, they became a group most willing to expand food comfort horizons.

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