



Perry County

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2008 County Highlights

Preparing Youth for Success

- “4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills.” In other words, 4-H is preparing youth for future success. Perry County 4-H offers a variety of opportunities for members ages 14–18 to gain such skills. Twenty teens actively participated in the Junior Leadership Club, in which they plan and conduct their own annual schedule including educational, social, and service activities. This year members have participated in an Etiquette Dinner, attended the Ohio 4-H Teen Conference, and learned about campfire safety and careers in Physical Therapy. They have also served the community by conducting a village Easter egg hunt, cleaning up a stretch of highway, and completing a Make a Difference Day project with a local drug and alcohol treatment facility. Thirty-five teens gained leadership and responsibility by serving on the Junior Fair Board. Junior Fair Board members plan and assist with Junior Fair livestock shows and events, which includes public speaking, record keeping, customer service, teamwork, and working cooperatively with adults. Twenty-three teens were selected to serve as 4-H camp counselors. Counselors are provided with 24 hours of training on topics such as behavior and risk management, first aid and safety, and program planning. They are then responsible for planning and conducting all events for the 5-day, 4-night camp, and for the supervision of 80 campers, ages 8–13.
- **Super You**—Students Understanding the Importance of Proper Eating and Exercising Routines is a nutrition, health, and fitness program designed for upper elementary students. Sixty-seven fourth graders participated in the four-part nutrition programming efforts. The topics covered included MyPyramid, Vitamins and Minerals, Exercise, and Portion Distorting/Serving Sizes. Pre/post-test scores revealed a 34% increase in knowledge gained during the four-part program series.

Strengthening Families and Communities

- According to the national organization Afterschool Alliance, only 7% of Ohio’s youth are participating in afterschool programs, while nearly 30% of Ohio’s youth are unsupervised during the hours after school. This time frame, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m., is when youth are most likely to participate in juvenile crime and other risky behaviors. This data demonstrates the need for high-quality, low-cost, convenient afterschool opportunities.
- To help meet this need, Perry County 4-H continued assisting with afterschool programs in 2008. Working with the Perry-Hocking Educational Service Center, the educator offered weekly hour-long programs in two school districts this spring using the theme of “Health and Wellness.” Fifty Northern Local School students, grades 2–5, learned about nutrition and fitness, including MyPyramid. Partnering with a Perry County Master Gardener, forty-five Crooksville School students in grades 2–5 learned about seeds and how they affect the food chain. Additionally, these students learned about gardening and planted beans that they were able to take home. 4-H Afterschool programming enriches the academic content and provides a fun learning opportunity for participants.
- Helping Children Cope with Divorce is a monthly, two and one half hour, court mandated parenting education program for couples going through a divorce or dissolution who have children 18 years of age and younger. The program focuses on the emotional process of divorce and strengthening families in this time of transition. A total of 110 individuals participated in programming efforts. An end-of-the meeting evaluation distributed to all class participants showed that 99% learned new information as a result of participating in the educational program, and 99% plan to use the information learned in this program. Some of the information identified included how to better deal with child’s emotions, the importance of developing a good relationship with former spouse for the sake of the children, and being more open and honest with the child/children.
 - Principles of Parenting is a Juvenile Court-mandated, parenting education for non-married individuals petitioning for custody of their child or children, court referrals, and/or the Perry County Job and Family Services clients as part of their case management plan. The Principles of Parenting series encompasses the Challenges of Parenting, Building Family Strengths including basic living skills and self-esteem, and Something Better than Punishment, Discipline. Ninety-eight individuals participated during the calendar year. An end-of-the meeting evaluation distributed to all class participants showed that 96% learned something new as a result of participating in the educational program, while 85% plan to adopt one or more of the educational practices shared. Some of the practices identified included being a parent, not a “pushover”; that parent-

ing is the toughest job they'll ever have, but also, the most rewarding job; and the importance of parenting together even though we are apart.

- Dining with Diabetes is a research project that teaches individuals with diabetes and their families better ways to prepare food that may improve their diabetes management. A three-part series was in collaboration with the OSU Extension, Perry County, the Perry County Health Department, and Family Health Care, Inc. of New Lexington. An Ohio Department of Health, Cardiovascular grant helped to off-set the cost of the program to clientele. Fourteen individuals participated in programming efforts. End-of-the meeting evaluations revealed that 100% feel their knowledge of diabetes increased. The three main changes that class participants plan to make are cutting down on portion sizes, using less salt, and exercising more.

Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment

- In 2008, over 400 Perry County 4-H members were enrolled one or more of the following livestock projects: beef, swine, sheep, dairy, goats, poultry, or rabbits. All of these youth participated in some level of Quality Assurance, learning about good production practices in raising a food product for consumers. At least 185 of these members participated specifically in Pork Quality Assurance, a more in-depth educational program on raising a high-quality pork product. Participating in these programs not only educates the youth, but also works to insure a safe food market for our nation. Over the past several years, 36 Perry County youth have successfully elected to test-out of PQA, receiving scores higher than 70%. Completion of a Quality Assurance program is encouraged by commodity groups and required by the State of Ohio and many packing plants nationwide.
- Over 80 youth (a 30% increase over 2007) participated in optional Livestock Skillathons. Skillathons are a series of specie-specific skill stations testing an exhibitor's knowledge on everything from body parts to breeds and meat cuts to medication labels. Scores ranged from 42.5–96 (on a 100 scale), with an average score of 74.5. This program creates a well-rounded exhibitor and prepares youth for future success in the livestock and/or agriculture field.
- A three-day series of meetings were held for area beef producers to manage current forage shortages due to a late freeze and drought conditions in 2007. The meetings covered nutritional strategies to increase production and reduce economic impacts of the high feed

costs. Each of the twelve producers was given individual help with diet formulation tailored to their operation. The area producers attending represented a total 816 cattle.

- A series of five pasture meetings were held throughout the county in conjunction with NRCS and FSA agencies. The meetings focused on alternative forages, pasture layout and designs, watering systems, handling facilities, and manure storage systems. Over 115 producers attended with a total of 15 hours of instruction on environmental and production practices.
- Livestock mortality composting certification was offered this year to local livestock producers. The program covers the rules and regulations necessary.
- The Perry County Master Gardeners Home and Garden Show promoted landscaping and gardening plants. This two-day event featured over 32 area businesses highlighting their products and services to local homeowners. The event raised \$2,300 and is used to promote horticulture education throughout the county, and to sponsor local events and youth junior fair awards.
- Safety programs included pesticide training and recertification to 47 adults participants. Ninety-eight percent indicated adopt various pesticide practices as a result of the training. Six producers attended a training session to prepare for the pesticide license exam. Additionally, a farm safety program was given to local Farm Bureau members to attain their workers compensation discount rates. Sessions on emergency plans, all terrain vehicle, and tractor safety were presented.

Advancing Employment and Income Opportunities

- Financial management skills make a difference in how well families cope with unfavorable economic conditions whether they are unemployed, underemployed, or experiencing a temporary decrease in income. Managing Your Money is offered monthly, through one, two and one-half hour, hands-on class focusing on basic money management for clients through the Perry County Job and Family Services. Twenty-seven clients participated in the educational programming efforts. An end-of-the meeting evaluation distributed to all class participants showed that 96% learned something new as a result of participating in the educational program, and 96% plan to adopt one or more of the educational practices shared. Some of the practices identified included tracking spending to determine spending leaks, saving money, and obtaining a free credit report.

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