



Ashtabula County

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2008 County Highlights

Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment

- The Ashtabula County Agricultural Extension educator was the lead investigator for three economic impact research projects for Ohio's grape and wine industry in 2007–2008. These studies examined the industry's economic output, future operational concerns, and the impact visitors have on local communities while visiting wineries and vineyards. These studies provided baseline economic development data that was not previously known and yielded information on the continuing education needs of the industry. One glaring need identified was the lack of estate and succession planning as 80% of the respondents indicated they did not have an estate plan for their operation.
- Eleven county residents completed the eleven-week training program to become certified Master Gardeners in 2008. In total, the 42 Ashtabula County Master Gardeners volunteered 2,073 hours (value of \$40,442) in 2008. The Master Gardeners conducted the Bud Club to 80 youth, gave the Seeds presentation to 425 elementary school children, gave multiple public presentations, taught five community classes for 133 county residents, helped conduct the Ashtabula City Schools Veggie Derby, and coordinated the floral show at the Ashtabula County Fair. The group also conducted the horticultural hot-line helping 370 county residents with plant, insect, and disease issues.
- 823 Ashtabula County producers participated in 14 production agriculture programs. These programs were on beef cow management, conservation tillage, dairy production, grape temperature sensing, soil fertility, nutrient management, chemical weed control, soybean and corn disease management, pesticide education, federal farm bill, and agriculture tax management.
- OSU Extension assisted 36 dairy producers enhance their profitability by offering two three-day workshops on artisan cheese making in 2008. Ninety-two percent of the attendees indicated they plan to explore a cheese-making business. Ninety percent of the attendees also indicated they would be interested in participating in a cheese marketing cooperative. One of the couples in the first short course held in 2006 has already opened a cheese house and is marketing cheese in the Cleveland Metropolitan area.
- Eighteen residents participated in a five-week Women in Agriculture Program. This program helped farm women develop their management and decision-making skills in the dynamic world of agriculture. Participants were provided education in personal development, family business communication, financial risk management, record keeping, marketing agriculture products, benchmarking, investment planning, and stress management.
- Twenty-five producers participated in an eleven-week Grain Marketing Course. This college-level grain marketing course provided 55 hours of in-class training on grain marketing, risk management, basis calculation, and marketing research.
- The \$75.2 million environmental dredging of the Ashtabula Harbor started in 2006 is complete. Work to remediate the habitat on the river and certify the remediation is ongoing. A clean river protects Lake Erie from contamination, allows increased commercial shipping, and provides new opportunities for marinas and other tourism-related businesses. In 2008, the Ashtabula River Partnership achieved its long-term goal of removing more than 635,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment from the Ashtabula River and placing it in a specially designed landfill. Ohio Sea Grant Extension was one of the founding partners of the Ashtabula River Partnership in 1994 and has provided research information, ideas, and assistance to clean up this important tributary.

Preparing Youth for Success

- In 2008, the Ashtabula County 4-H Youth Development program had 1,038 members, guided by 258 adult volunteers, who participated in a wide variety of program topics. A total of 4,379 youth were reached through camp and school-related programs such as Veggie Derby, Real Money Real World, team building, and chicken embryology.
- 4-H Camp Whitewood—Northeastern Ohio 4-H Camps, Inc. celebrated 68 years of positive youth development serving 4-H and schoolchildren throughout Ohio's nine northeastern counties. In May, Brandon Mitchell was hired as the camp's new executive director. Camper enrollment numbers continued to grow with 1,048 4-H campers this summer and school groups in spring and fall enrolling 2,404 campers. Camp hosted a total of 4,277 visitors in 2008.
- The Ashtabula County 4-H Camp Whitewood 2008 program reached 100% capacity once again this year. The county had 28 exceptional counselors who learned

skills involved with leadership and camping. These counselors then counseled 172 4-H and non-4-H campers. The theme of this year's camp was Super Heroes. The week was filled with entertainment, educational experiences, and the learning of social and life skills.

- In 2008, ten 4-H clubs completed an international project in which the 4-H club raises and sells a market animal project at the fair. The proceeds are then donated to an international charity. In 2008, approximately \$2,500 dollars was donated to Pinetown, South Africa, for school uniforms for needy children.

Strengthening Families and Communities

- In Ashtabula County, over 200 women participated in the StrongWomen™ program. This program provides strength and nutrition training for women of all ages. Of those who finished an evaluation: 100% of the participants felt that their health improved; 100% felt physically stronger; 90% felt their weight had somewhat improved; 100% felt their balance had improved; and 100% increased their selection of healthy foods as a result of the StrongWomen™ class.
- A total of 122 students participated in the OSU Extension's Veggie Derby held in collaboration with Action for Healthy Kids, the Ashtabula County Health Department, the Ashtabula City Schools, and the Ashtabula County Master Gardener Program. The main objective of the program was to teach fifth-grade students how to identify and select 32 different vegetables, learn their nutritional value, and participate in a physical activity related to the nutritional value of vegetables. Three months after the initial program, students were tested on their knowledge and built race cars out of vegetables. This portion of the program taught the students a variety of skills including: team building, leadership, and problem solving. As a result of "Veggie Derby," teachers surveyed indicated 100% of the students were able to identify more vegetables and 100% of the students are more aware of vegetables at lunch, in the grocery store, and in the home.
- Over 1,000 Ashtabula County residents attended the first annual "The Longest Day of Play" on June 21 at Lakeshore Park. This program encourages children to use the extra daylight hours during the summer solstice to get outside and participate in various physical activities. The Longest Day of Play was coordinated by the OSU Extension office along with 32 different community organizations. The main goal of the program was to educate Ashtabula County citizens on the opportunities to participate in family fitness, offer healthy snacks, and provide physical fitness activities for youth and adults

to participate in as a family. As a result of the program, 81% of participants indicated they are more familiar with local fitness resources and 87% indicated they plan to participate in some type of physical activity after the event. Pedometers were given to 153 adults who logged 73,393 steps while at the event. This is the equivalent of 32 miles walked during the four-hour period.

- At Millennium Inorganics, a program entitled America on the Move™ was used as a guide to encourage participants to increase daily steps by 2,000 and cut out 100 calories every day for six weeks. The funding for this program was provided by a grant from Ashtabula Foundation. Of those who participated, the total steps taken as a result of the program were 12,160,890 steps or 6,080 miles (the distance from Ashtabula to San Diego and back)! A total of 88 pounds were lost as a result. 100% of the participants indicated they had changed their diet and are eating healthier foods as a result of the program.

Advancing Employment and Income Opportunities

- The Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension educator along with Extension educators in Geauga and Trumbull counties designed, developed, and taught a small farmer college in the fall of 2008. Thirty-one new small farmers owning 1,435 acres participated and learned about agricultural business planning, enterprise selection, marketing, and available agricultural resources. Of the attendees, 93% indicated they would proceed with developing a business plan for their agricultural operation.
- OSU Extension, in cooperation with the eight public school systems in Ashtabula County, conducted the "Reality Day—Real Money, Real World Program" for the fifth consecutive year in which 1,682 students participated. The students learned how their performance in school could affect their earnings later in their lives. One student commented, "He had better study hard because he didn't want to live all his life on peanut butter and jelly sandwiches." Teachers involved in this program indicated they have seen a difference in the study habits in many of their students after completing this project.
- OSU Extension and the Ashtabula County Agricultural Scholarship Fund Committee presented a total of \$9,500 in scholarship money to ten outstanding youth to pursue careers in agriculture, environmental sciences, or family and consumer sciences. The 4-H Foundation for Ashtabula County provided \$5,000 in scholarships for five Ashtabula County youth.

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