



Darke County

603 Wagner Ave.
Greenville 45331, 937-548-5215



EXTENSION

2008 County Highlights

Preparing Youth for Success

- A total of 1,086 youth participated in the community club 4-H program. Youth improved life skills related to organization, time management, responsibility, communication, and leadership.
- 255 adult volunteers served as advisors for the 1,086 youth enrolled in 49 community clubs. Volunteers provided leadership in project related work and community service activities.
- 85 campers, ages 9–14, participated in a four-day residential 4-H camp at Indian Hills 4-H Camp. Campers learned leadership skills, life skills, and the value of working together to achieve goals.
- 25 teens volunteered to serve as camp counselors. They participated in over 24 hours of training prior to camp. Counselors organized and conducted educational activities and workshops for campers.
- 41 Junior Fair Board members planned and conducted Junior Fair activities for over 2,300 exhibitors. Junior Fair Board members reported an increase in life skills related to conflict management, organization, and communication.
- 300 high school freshmen learned the importance of setting and obtaining career goals, as well as financial management skills, through participation in “Real Money, Real World.” Sixteen local businesses donated their time to enrich this educational program.
- 38 youth, ages 5–8, attended Cloverbud Day Camp. Campers participated in sessions designed to increase their environmental awareness. Session topics were related to hummingbirds, bats, worms, and a nature hike. 100% of participants said they would attend another Cloverbud Day Camp, if given the opportunity.
- 24 youth participated in the Extreme Dog Experience to increase their knowledge and understanding of working with their dog project. Campers improved their skills in showmanship, obedience, and grooming.
- 110 teens and their parents participated in CARTEENS classes for first-time traffic offenders. Teen participants reported an increase in awareness and the importance of not drinking and driving and the need for safety belts. As a result of attending CARTEENS, parents reported an increase in awareness of the risks related to teenage drivers.

- Over 1,800 youth ages 5–12, participated in hands-on learning through enrichment and after school programs. Lessons focused on chick embryology, plant life cycle, bread making, weather, and worm habitats. Teachers stated the students understood and enjoyed learning much more with the hands-on experience rather than lecture only.

Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment

- Research/Demonstration Farm—On-farm research was conducted on the 100-acre Darke County Research Farm. On-farm research projects include: Yield and Economic Comparisons of Low Linolenic Soybeans with Conventional Glyphosate Resistant Soybeans, 1st generation corn root worm survey, Western Bean Cutworm survey, and Asian soybean rust sentinel plots. This data is shared with local farmers and university researchers.
- Livestock Mortality Composting Certification courses (state and local)—In the last 11 years, the Darke County Agriculture Extension educator has been instrumental in instructing producers on how to set up and manage on-farm mortality composting facilities. Over 3,600 individuals statewide have been certified in livestock mortality composting.
- Pasture Walks—In collaboration with Miami, Clark, and Shelby counties, four pasture walks were held during the past summer. Bob Hendershot, NRCS Grazing Specialist, helped educate local livestock operators on proper pasture and forage management techniques. Over 200 people attended the grazing seminars last year including producers from Texas and Utah.
- Western Ohio Agronomy Field Day—The 5th Annual Western Ohio Agronomy Field Day was held at the Darke County Research Farm. Local crop producers participated in scouting fields for diseases and insect pest, and they also received the latest information on controlling herbicide resistant weeds and producing low-linolenic soybeans. Additional information was given on precision farming techniques and nitrogen fertilizer application. Producers who attended the field day received pesticide recertification credits and Certified Crop Advisor credits.
- Educational Resource for Livestock Commodity Groups—Educational programs are provided for the

county clientele including Pork Quality Assurance Training, Transportation Quality Assurance Training, swine production programs in cooperation with the University of Nebraska, and farm leadership tours. In addition, up-to-date information is electronically delivered to over 300 e-mail recipients. This includes the weekly Agronomic C.O.R.N newsletter, the OSU Extension Beef Newsletter, Ohio Ag Managers Newsletter, and the Pond Management Newsletter.

- Pesticide Applicators Training—The Darke County Agriculture Extension educator presented programs to help re-certify local producers in the area of livestock, agronomy, and horticulture categories. Last year, over 200 producers were re-certified in Darke County. Over 95% of the 200 participants in the Pesticide Re-certification Program in Darke County responded to a survey, indicating that they are keeping better pesticide records, reading labels more carefully, and controlling drift as a result of our re-certification programs. 90% of respondents indicated a greater awareness of environmental concerns.
- Hunter Safety Course—The Darke County Agriculture Extension educator conducted a hunter safety course, which is required by the Ohio Department of Wildlife for first-time hunters to purchase their licenses. Over the last 10 years, approximately 680 young hunters have been certified in proper safety and ethics of hunting.

Strengthening Families and Communities

- 163 divorcing parents learned how to communicate with their children about divorce and the importance of minimizing conflict with their child's other parent in the Helping Children Succeed After Divorce program offered monthly.
- 80 teens in two county high schools used infant simulator dolls to learn about responsibility, time, effort, and costs of having a baby. Teens fed, diapered, played with, and nurtured "Baby Think It Over" dolls as part of a teen pregnancy prevention program. Students were given computerized feedback on their "care" of the babies and discussed how the birth of a child would impact their lives.
- The 200 participants attending the Friday Sampler, an educational program during the Darke County Fair, learned how to grow and care for their shrubs and plants, and saw some wonderful quilts. Attendees said the program was very informational and educational.
- 1,200 adults participated in health fairs where they received information pertaining to keeping food safe. They observed a display showing how fast bacteria can grow in two hours if not kept at the proper temperature.
- Five individuals with food service jobs participated in ServSafe training. All five passed the exam demonstrating their understanding of food safety principles.
- 45 Extension Homemakers Club members studied the following topics during 2008: "AAAA-Choo!! You've Got It! Preventing and Managing Illness" and "Putting Your Crockpot to Work."
- 21 people participated in Dining With Diabetes. Participants learned how to make correct food choices and how food plays an important role in diabetes.
- 94 senior adults attending Community Action Partnership Congregate Meal Program participated in two Family Nutrition Programs. One lesson focused on using the nutrition facts label to make lower sodium choices, and the other lesson on selecting low fat dairy foods as a way of eating heart healthy. Following the sodium lesson, 88% of participants stated they learned new information. 67% said they planned to make some recommended changes, using nutrition facts labels.
- "Since attending your lessons, our family eats lots more fruits and vegetables," said Debbie, a stay-at-home mom of two boys, ages eight and three. Debbie has attended several Darke County FNP lessons held during the Health Department's Help Me Grow Story Time. Debbie said she is making "healthier food choices" for her family and using healthy recipes, shared by the FNP Program Assistant, to try new foods at home. Many of the recipes are a regular part of her family's diet. "I'm also using peanut butter in new ways," she shared. Before the classes, she only used peanut butter to make sandwiches, but now uses it in more recipes, using peanut butter obtained with her WIC coupons. "I used to not get the peanut butter that I had coupons for, because I didn't want to waste it," but now Debbie has new ways of using the peanut butter, stretching her food dollars further.
- 36 adults participated in a series of Nutrition and Meal Planning Classes. Topics included budgeting food money, making nutritious food choices, meal planning, food shopping strategies, and food safety. Participants indicated they learned to use unit pricing and food labels. Participants shared they changed their practices in handling food after learning some of their previous practices were not safe.

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Keith L. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, Ohio State University Extension
TDD No. 800-589-8292 (Ohio only) or 614-292-1868