



Guernsey County

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2008 County Highlights

Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment

- Forage production is of critical importance to Guernsey County's growing number of livestock producers. The drought of 2007 destroyed a number of area pastures and hayfields. With these areas needing to be reseeded, a workshop was planned and conducted in conjunction with Guernsey SWCD to address this issue. Twenty-two area farmers attended the "Successful Seeding Workshop" held in February. Program evaluations indicated this was a high-quality program 4.4 (5 being highest possible level of usefulness of information). A follow-up evaluation of the participants indicated that 90% of those attending and replanting were able to implement the practices taught and produced a productive stand.
- 40 area livestock producers attended a three-part grazing management workshop in March. This program focused on how to implement rotational grazing, water system development, and fencing systems to improve farm productivity and protect the environment. USDA estimates that many attending this program completed a grazing management plan, and implemented the conservation practices taught impacting thousands of acres of land in Guernsey County. In addition, many of the area farmers attending received cost-share dollars from the USDA EQIP program for cost-share of the conservation practices taught in this program.
- 22 participants and 8 Master Gardeners attended a three-week class on landscape design, offered in March. Taught by local Master Gardeners, the participants rated the program information a 4.8 on a usefulness scale of five. Attendees indicated they gained much knowledge from this program and are now able to draw up a garden plan and make wise plant selections.
- Master Gardeners volunteered a total of 875 hours in 2008. They assisted in more than 25 educational activities, directly reaching of 950 adults and youth. Several thousand more were impacted through lectures, displays, television, and newspaper articles. If a value were placed on their time, the Master Gardeners would have given back to the community \$14,875. These volunteers are now involved in training new Master Gardener volunteers. They offer expert advice and develop educational programs in areas such as beekeeping, invasive plants, gardening basics, selection/propagation of perennials and annuals, and composting.

Advancing Employment and Income Opportunities

- Guernsey County ranks in the top ten Ohio counties for the exploration of oil and gas. Landmen, speculators, brokers, and energy companies are approaching landowners in an attempt to secure a drilling lease. The only Ohio State University fact sheet for landowners, "Leasing Farmland for Oil and Gas Production" was developed as an educational resource along with presentations to educate farmland owners on various aspects of leasing farmland for drilling. Twenty-five farmland owners attended the April program on "Leasing Farmland for Oil and Gas." Participants rated this program as a 4.8 (5 being highest possible level of usefulness of information). More than 120 farmland owners have attended oil and gas programs in 2008. Evaluations indicated farmland owners learned important aspects related to leasing and plan to contact an attorney prior to signing a lease.
- The cost of producing livestock has a narrow margin of profitability. One way of increasing farm profitability is to increase production levels, i.e., rate of gain, feed efficiency, etc. In attempt to assist local cattle producers with this dilemma, a three-day seminar on the use of artificial insemination (A.I.) was conducted. This seminar consisted of classroom instruction and hands-on demonstrations. Class size was limited to 20 participants to maintain quality education. Attendees indicated that they have been able to implement the practices taught at this workshop and have adopted artificial insemination.

Strengthening Families and Communities

- Community Development received grant dollars to provide facilitation and strategic planning for the Guernsey Dog Shelter Advisory Board. The advisory board developed a mission and vision, and created action steps to allow them to plan short-term and long-term goals for the County Dog Shelter.
- The grant-funded Family Nutrition Program taught 626 adults and 925 youth the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Participants learned to balance food with exercise, choose healthy foods, and prepare food to fit budget and family needs.
- The percent of children who are overweight has more than doubled since the 1970s. OSU Extension Family and Consumer Sciences taught a new public education

outreach program WE CAN (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity and Nutrition) to help shape behavior of eating right and including physical activity. Participants learned about energy balance and ideas for improving food choices.

- The Ohio County Commissioners Association in cooperation with OSU Extension Family and Consumer Sciences team conducted a survey indicating a need for educational curriculum designed to assist with wellness education. A survey conducted by 20 counties provided a list of topics needed by county employees to improve their health and wellness. The OSU Extension team Live Healthy Live Well developed educational information to meet those needs. Ongoing education is provided in multiple methods to meet the needs of county employees throughout Ohio.
- The Adjusting to Family Change program reached 695 fourth and fifth graders in four schools. Students identified the effects of divorce, death, and moving; and learned communication, self-esteem, and coping skills. Each student received a journal to write about feelings, problems, and goals.
- The Community Action Team (A-Team) involves youth, ages 12–18, who like volunteering in the community. A-Team members receive requests from 4-H and community groups that need volunteer help. Those members volunteering 20+ hours are recognized at the 4-H Achievement Banquet. A total of 22 members reported 1,337 hours of volunteer work assisting with several 4-H and community activities. Five members also served on a review board this year to award \$500 to 4-H clubs for community service projects.
- 375 4-H and FFA members participated in Livestock Quality Assurance programs to learn the 10 good production practices needed to raise a safe and wholesome product for consumers. 126 members also participated in the livestock skillathon contest consisting of interviews, evaluation of livestock records, and simulation exercises. 76 volunteers donated 276 hours to plan and conduct these programs, providing a variety of hands-on instruction and learning experiences.
- 531 kindergarten students celebrated 4-H Week by participating in the Reading Makes the Best Better program. Students listen to stories, learn about Cloverbud activities, receive a free book, and enjoy cookies and juice. Parents completing the program survey consistently agree that their child enjoyed the book and a family member read the book with their child. Almost all thought the program would encourage their child to read more.
- 175 volunteers donated approximately 2,100 hours to successfully plan, conduct, and evaluate a variety of youth development programs through committee work, enabling youth to develop skills and knowledge in specialized subject areas. Committees in the areas of beef, dairy, equine, goats, poultry, rabbits, sheep, swine, dogs, livestock quality assurance, Junior Fair awards, Junior Fair sale, and 4-H advisory reach over 2,500 people annually through their efforts.
- 55 4-H Cloverbuds participated in an educational tour of the Southeastern Ohio Regional Medical Center in Cambridge. Cloverbuds, parents, and advisors learned about what goes on in a hospital; made first aid kits; learned proper hand-washing techniques; viewed X-rays; learned about the circulatory system; got a chance to get physical while playing a game; and engaged in several hands-on fun learning experiences while touring the hospital. The hospital staff showed Cloverbuds how to make good food choices and treated them to healthy snacks.

Preparing Youth for Success

- County 4-H member enrollment totals 1,520 youth, reaching almost 21% of eligible youth. The county offers 55 community clubs led by 226 adult volunteers. Membership includes 855 youth in club groups and 638 in school and camping programs. Members completed almost 2,272 projects to learn about personal development, careers, and hobbies.
- 129 campers make the Guernsey County 4-H Camp a popular program for leadership and citizenship skill development. Over \$4,000 is provided for scholarships from community and 4-H organizations. Twenty-four hours of training and planning meetings enable counselors to develop skills to work with youth in a group setting. Evaluations from campers, counselors, and parents are consistently positive.

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