



# Meigs County

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## 2008 County Highlights

### Strengthening Families and Communities

- The Meigs County Family Nutrition Program made contact with 597 participants in 107 programs in 2008. Indirect contacts of 6,641 were made through fact sheets and newsletters. Participants received information related to the Family Nutrition Program objectives of dietary quality, food safety, thrifty food shopping, and food security. A series of classes were taught on the MyPyramid to 28 individuals. When surveyed, scores showed an increase in the number of participants who used the Nutrition Facts food label to make food choices. The mean of those using the food labels increased from 2.75 (out of a scale where 1 equals never and 5 equals always) to 3.71. Increases in the other target messages were also noted. Some comments from participants' questionnaires were: "I never realized how much sodium was in canned soup until I read the labels," "I plan on reading or paying more attention to labels from now on," (I'll) "look for Vitamin A content in foods," and "I understand how to look for fat in foods now."
- The OSU Master Gardener program has provided the opportunity for sixteen Master Gardeners donated over 200 hours (valued at \$3,500) to various local community activities. Improved family health activities in conjunction with the Meigs Senior Citizens Center sponsoring a spring and two fall perennial plant, houseplant, and seed exchanges for over 100 participants. Demonstrations given on growing perennials, container gardening, heirloom tomatoes, propagation and care of houseplants were given at the county fair, Spring/Fall Plant Exchanges, and Meigs Garden Clubs' Annual Holiday Show. They provided expertise for managing downtown beautification projects.
- A six-part series of home management and child rearing practices was presented to clients of the Meigs County Office of Children's Services in April and May of 2008. Forty-seven percent of these families indicated at program's end that they had learned one or more things as a result of this series. Topics ranged from Meal Planning and Preparation, Food Safety, and Helping Picky Eaters Try New Foods to Family Budgeting and Raising Healthy Children.
- One of the major barriers to quitting the smoking habit, especially among women, is the fact that most ex-smokers experience a weight gain during the first few months after quitting. The Meigs County Family and Consumer Sciences Extension educator provided support for a smoking cessation program (sponsored by Holzer Clinic–Meigs County) by teaching prospective ex-smokers the reasons for this potential weight increase along with ways to prevent it. Of those attendees responding to an end-of-program survey, 62% indicated learning at least two ways to avoid gaining weight as part of the smoking cessation process.
- In cooperation with the ABLE (Adult Basic Literacy Education) program, twelve classes on the topic of dietary quality, food safety, and thrifty food shopping were taught to thirty low income adults. Monthly nutrition newsletters were left at the site to provide students and their families' valuable information on healthy eating, food safety, and stretching their food dollars.
- Partnered with the Meigs County Cancer Initiative, local Curves business, and the Meigs County Cooperative Parish Nurse to provide nutritional displays, programs, and fact sheets to approximately 280 Meigs County citizens.
- Good health has been another major focus this year in the 4-H afterschool programs. Partnering with our FCS educator and program assistant, MyPyramid and good nutrition habits were taught in afterschool settings. Another focus was the Health Rocks program. A grant was received to implement the Health Rocks program in our afterschool programs. Health Rocks is a teen mentor lead program for youth ages 8–12 focusing on making positive decisions about drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Nine Meigs Teen Leaders taught 45 afterschool youth about good decision making, how to deal with stress, peer pressure, and much more.

### Preparing Youth for Success

- The 4-H Community Club program saw another year of growth in 2008. Twenty-five volunteers were selected and trained in addition to the returning volunteers bringing the total of numbers serving Meigs youth to 94 (a 21% increase). Similar increases in the number of community clubs (10%) and in membership (9%) were seen. Over 500 youth were served in community clubs including Cloverbuds and project members. These youth succeeded in Cloverbud activities and project-related work that will help them as they continue to grow and develop. In addition over 100 of these youth attend either a summer or day camp program this year, continuing to build strong life skills.

- Meigs 4-H Teen Leaders has doubled in membership and activities. Attending Teen Conference, completing Achievement Records, participating in state-level leadership roles, conducting community service projects, serving as leaders in camp and other volunteer roles, and serving as role models in the community for 4-H are just a few things these youth have done. Meigs Teen Leaders are taking an active role in preparing for their future.
- Healthy lifestyle programs were held at the Mulberry Community Center's God's N.E.T. (Neighbor Escape for Teens), Nineteen students in grades ranging from second grade to high school prepared nutritious snacks after a discussion of each of the MyPyramid food groups. These lessons were reinforced by playing MyPyramid Bingo. Twenty-five students learned the importance of hand washing using the glo-germ teaching tool. Daily exercise was reinforced with a physical activity at the end of each educational session.
- Partnered with the Retired Senior Volunteer's Yesteryear program teaching 25 fifth-grade children cooking skills and science behind baking bread, rolls, and noodles. This program teaches Appalachian crafts and skills from the past.
- Over 60 landowners, forestry students, federal, state, and community land managers from ten counties attended a daylong program on how to identify and control invasive plants and replant areas with native plant species.
- Forty horticultural crop growers were advised and visits were made when problems arose concerning pests, production, and marketing issues. Reached out to hundreds of Ohio commercial vegetable growers, under an OSU Outreach and Engagement Grant, to reduce contamination by their production, grading, and handling practices. Over thirty percent were going to implement changes in their business practices. State specialists were invited into the region and county to share their knowledge of energy cost savings, insect pests, and production improvements affecting local growers. Provided leadership to 100 regional and international growers in setting up and hosting tour of northern Ohio growers' production systems, with emphasis on energy alternatives, such as waste wood boilers, energy curtains, and open roof ventilation systems.
- Horticulture information was provided to regional residents to improve their lawns, gardens, orchards, soils, and trees using monthly television presentations, weekly newspaper columns, presentations to various groups, and hundreds of phone calls and office visits.
- Partnerships with local afterschool programs have been another great highlight of 2008. Over 100 youth, grades 1-8 have participated in afterschool sessions that have focused on a variety of topics. Acres of Adventure and Breads of Harvest are two curriculums that have been utilized. The youth have learned various lessons about how agriculture affects them in a variety of ways including where food comes from, being good stewards to the environment, and how agriculture and natural resources play a role in a lot of the science they are learning about in school.

### **Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment**

- Saved \$3,700 for 18 landowners in registering 56 parcels of farmland containing 1,239 acres under the property tax program, Current Agricultural Use Valuation (CAUV). Provided soil test assistance to 31 agri-businesses and reviewed results involving 780 acres of grain crops, hay fields, vegetables, and pastures. Nutrient management, especially high phosphorus levels and low calcium levels in vegetable crops and low calcium levels and poor fertility levels in pasture and hay fields were evident in the test results. Application of much-needed nutrients will increase yields 50 to 100 percent over present practices. Several properties near waterways will also benefit by reduction of nitrogen applications, which normally are applied and would wash into the streams.
- Pesticide recertification trainings were held in three sessions for 27 agri-businesses. They operate 4,000 acres and two greenhouse ranges, and earned over \$1,500,000 of farm income. Over 30 percent participants indicated they were going to change their spraying practices after receiving pesticide training. The changes included the following: calibrating their equipment; managing spills, identifying pests before spraying; maintaining application equipment; using pesticide management practices to protect non-targeted plant and beneficial insects; and wearing protective equipment.

### **Advancing Employment and Income Opportunities**

- Assisted in partnership of OSU University of Rio Grande, Ohio University, and local Chamber in the development and implementation of classes for business workforce development and new business development for the entrepreneur. Developed county plans for improving tourism in the county including assisting in three percent bed tax, \$25,000 tourism budget, and improving county-wide relationships with tourism.
- With 100% of the school districts' participation in OSU signature program, "Real Money, Real World," 97% of the seniors indicated they gained financial knowledge.

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