



# Ross County

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EXTENSION

## 2007 Impact Statements

- Lifestyle audience is emerging for OSU Extension. A recent survey revealed that 66% of the **Small Farm College** participants have never attended an Extension program. 178 small farm owners with land bases averaging 78.5 acres with an estimated value of \$41,919,000 attended a nine-week school. Participants increased their knowledge in goal setting, business planning, enterprise budgeting, land and resource management and financial management. 80% of the participants developed or modified their small farm business plans as a result of attending this school.
- The **Family Nutrition Program** (FNP) reached 587 residents of Ross County during the 90 programs it offered in the past year. Indirect contacts were made with 4,513 residents through staffed displays or newsletters during the same period. Many of these indirect contacts were made at the 48 sessions held at local food banks or soup kitchens. A number of community groups are reporting higher numbers served at these facilities, due to a poor economy and higher gas and utility costs. These community groups report that the nutrition, budgeting, and food safety information their clients receive from FNP is an important service to the county. A \$37,204 grant supported by the Midwest Regional Food and Consumer Services, USDA funds this program.
- The Ross County **4-H CARTEENS** program educated 220 first-time juvenile traffic offenders through Juvenile Traffic Offenders Seminars (JTOS). A volunteer program coordinator, nine CARTEENS members and eight adult volunteers instructed the classes. JTOS participants reported they improved their understanding of traffic laws, the importance of seatbelt usage and reducing speed when driving. CARTEEN members reported increasing their knowledge of safe driving habits and laws as well as public speaking and leading groups. CARTEENS sponsored a Mock Crash docu-drama program to present the effects of unsafe driving habits and teen drinking. Over 50 teen and adult volunteers representing 17 different county organization/agencies worked together to present the event. 350 students (juniors and seniors) from three local high schools participated.
- **On-farm research** study applies real-life numbers to row crop budget. The application and use of fungicides in soybeans is a much debated practice in terms of its economic value to the soybean enterprise. Fungicide application to control leaf diseases in soybeans can cost growers from \$12 to \$18 per acre. Two replicated on-farm research plots were established to determine the economic affect of fungicide use in soybeans to control leaf diseases and enhance soybean yields. The economic impact for Ross County soybean growers @\$9.00 soybeans and an average yield increase of 6 bushels per acre could potentially generate an additional \$2,794,500 to Ross County's agricultural industry.
- Ross County was one of nine counties approved for a two-year **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program** (EFNEP) pilot project. This project offers "Eating Smart Being Active" in an eight-week series to limited income parents of children (ages birth to 18). A \$45,000 grant from federal legislation funds a full-time Program Assistant, Office Assistant support, employee training and travel, and all costs of educational materials for this project. Collaborating partners for these classes, which began fall of 2007, include: WIC, Jobs & Family Services, Metropolitan Housing, Head Start, and the Coalition against Domestic Violence.
- The Ross County Extension Advisory committee identified **farm and home** safety as a priority need area for educational programming. To respond to that need, a county **Safety Day** was conducted with 600 sixth grade youth attending. Five sponsoring organizations, Extension Advisory committee members, Extension Staff, Ohio 4-H Safety Team and volunteers provided youth instructions in ATV, electrical, water craft, firearm, fire, bicycle, dog, power take-off, and seatbelt safety. All youth received t-shirts and teachers were provided safety resource packets. Youth responding to post-program surveys indicated they learned something they could use in their daily lives, would recommend the camp to others, and would be willing to attend another camp themselves. The 2008 safety day will become a health and safety event for sixth graders in Ross County.
- Ross County had 537 youth participate in day and overnight **4-H camp**. Campers' parents participated in a Zoomerang survey to study reasons they send their kids to camp and if there is a change seen in their child's life skill development. Results of the camp survey showed that camp counselors were most important to the child's camping experience and next highest were team building and recreational activities. The following life, interpersonal and social skills were cited as most improved in descending order: social skills, character, independent living skills, community living, and communication skills. Informal feedback from campers (and their parents) indicated they gained useful knowledge and practical skills by working in groups, being away from home and living in a rustic environment. 57 4-H

teens participated in 22 hours of education on group leadership, communication, conflict management, health, safety, and youth development in preparation to serve as **camp counselors**. These teens contributed approximately 75 hours of service to 4-H, for a total of over 4,200 hours of volunteer service valued at \$28,770 (based on student minimum wage of \$6.85 per hour per the Independent Sector).

- The Ross County **Master Gardener Volunteer Program** provides intensive training in horticulture to interested gardeners who then volunteer their time assisting with educational programs and activities for Ross County residents. Thirty-six Ross County Master Gardener Volunteers provided a total of 1,649 volunteer hours to the community in 2007. Volunteers answered gardening questions, conducted activities with children and adults, developed the Canal Gardens Demonstration Garden, and partnered with local schools to offer horticultural education programs. This translated into an economic return on investment of \$25,444 to the Ross County community. The past four years Ross County Master Gardener Volunteers have been involved with the OSU Phenology Garden Research, gathering data on plant phenology as it relates to growing degree days and pest management as a holistic approach to pest management.
- **4-H in the Classroom** utilized curriculum-based methods of delivery to educate and reach out to new audiences of over 1,400 youth in area schools. 4-H in the Classroom assists students in gaining: knowledge and skills through science-based programming and hands-on activities; valuable life skills; an understanding and meeting academic content standards. The Inventor in Me curriculum was used for the first time in one area school. Program evaluations showed 270 fourth and fifth graders (200 new to 4-H) gained confidence, learned to “think outside the box,” brainstorm and problem solve. Every student presented their own invention in an invention fair at the end of twelve weeks. Students who didn’t typically perform well in school saw success as they placed first in the invention fair. Teachers reported the 4-H in the Classroom lessons helped students understand science concepts; students were interested in the lessons; lessons were easy to follow and kits were beneficial. Teachers reported they will use the kits again and want Extension to continue to furnish hands-on kits for various science topics.
- Modern **animal behavior and management techniques** combined with current feeding and marketing trends to remain economically competitive in a changing world was the theme for a two-day cattlemen’s seminar in Ross County. Dr. Temple Grandin, an expert in animal behavior, taught participants the importance of understanding how animals think and view their surroundings in order to handle them safely and properly. 150 beef producers increased their knowledge in animal behavior related to facility design and quality assurance to increase the economic value of their beef enterprise. Proper handling of livestock at the farm and at the processing plant could increase the value of fed cattle by \$20-\$50 per head. In Ross County this potentially translates into increased revenue of \$697,000 for cow/calf producers.
- Nine hundred fifty children took part in the **Ross County Family Nutrition Program’s educational programs at the eight summer feeding sites**. The children receiving free lunches learned a different nutrition, food safety, or physical fitness lesson each week. This program and a part-time Program Assistant were hired by a \$5,000 grant from Ross County Job & Family Services. In a post-program evaluation of the parents of participating children, the two most common responses to the question “What did your child learn as a result of the Summer Lunch Program?” were “Proper Nutrition” and “To exercise every day.”
- Six hundred and forty-two **adult volunteers provided leadership** to 106 community clubs and 18 other 4-H groups serving nearly 4,000 youth ages 5-18. Each advisor donated an estimated average of 4 hours per month to the Ross County 4-H program. The total value of this time is \$505,382 (at an adult volunteer rate of \$16.40 per hour according to the Independent Sector). These volunteers improved their skills in the areas of club management, positive youth development, quality assurance, and specific project content. Educational opportunities offered included volunteer orientation, community-based meetings, committees, and the Ohio 4-H volunteer conference. Adults participating in these opportunities indicated they gained new knowledge and skills that will improve the experience of the youth they serve.
- Over two hundred fifty County employees have taken part in **Worksite Wellness Lunch & Learn** sessions during 2007. Over 140 of these employees also participated in a 12-week fitness challenge, with 88% of the participants reporting lifestyle changes (such as: increased physical activity, drinking more water, eating breakfast regularly, and making better food choices) as a result of the program. Worksite Wellness programming is a cooperative effort with the Ross County Health District, OSU Extension, and various Ross County Departments. These and other health program efforts offered in Ross County contributed to Ross County being awarded a Silver Award from Healthy Ohio (1 of only 11 recognized communities in Ohio). Adena Health Foundation granted \$5,000 to expand these Worksite Wellness efforts through other employers in Ross and Pickaway counties over the next 18 months.

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