



Cooperative Extension Service



**KENTON
COUNTY
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION**

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ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

**450 KENTON LANDS RD
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2024



The Kenton County Cooperative Extension service plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for residents by providing educational programs, resources, and community engagement opportunities.

Through diverse initiatives in agriculture, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, and horticulture, Cooperative Extension empowers individuals and families with knowledge and skills that promote self-sufficiency, economic stability, and well-being.

Community Health & Wellbeing	Programs on nutrition, wellness, and stress management help individuals lead healthier lives, while initiatives such as the quilting class promote mental well-being, creativity, and social connections.
Lifelong Learning & Skill Development	Educational workshops provide training in areas such as financial literacy, food preservation, gardening, and sustainable living. Workforce and entrepreneurship programs equip individuals with practical skills for economic empowerment.
Youth Development (4-H Program)	The 4-H program engages young people in STEM, leadership, and civic engagement activities. Hands-on learning experiences foster confidence, responsibility, and problem-solving skills.
Agriculture & Environmental Stewardship	Support for local farmers and gardeners through sustainable farming practices, soil testing, and pest management education. Promotion of urban agriculture and home gardening for increased food security.
Community Engagement & Economic Development	Programs encourage volunteerism, leadership, and entrepreneurship, strengthening the local economy. Events and workshops bring people together, fostering a sense of community and collaboration.

A Lasting Impact

By providing research-based education and hands-on learning opportunities, the Kenton County Cooperative Extension service continues to enrich lives, build stronger families, and create a healthier, more connected community. Residents gain tools allowing them to thrive both personally and professionally, making Kenton County a stronger and more resilient place to live.



Community Impact



147

4-H Volunteers

Engaged in teaching & supporting programs.

24

Master Gardner Volunteers

Giving 605 hours to extension programing and work in the extension garden.

102

Kenton County Homemakers

Gave 2000 hours teaching a variety of programs and raising funds for local charities and ovarian cancer.

37

NEP Volunteers

Gave 347 hours to 35 programs that worked with 205 youth and 178 adults.

9

Master Clothing Volunteers

Gave 1200 hours to teaching clothing construction, quilting & other sewing projects.

AGRICULTURE

BEEF FIELD DAY

Cattle Marketing Educational Program and Field Day Offered to Local Beef Producers

The pressures of sustainability, high input costs, and reviewing practices of small cow/calf operations can help farmers be more efficient and profitable. Kenton County ANR agents paired a local small beef operation with UK Beef IRM specialist team to be part of a local demonstration farm. The participating farm worked with specialists in all areas of their farm. Special emphasis included forage production, grazing plans, water development for their largest pasture, genetics, and calving. The Beef IRM team and the ANR agent worked one-on-one with the farm family on each area to determine a two year plan of work and develop the strategy to accomplish these goals. The data and the changes made to the farm are to be included in state wide data as well as allowing field days for other farmers.

The Kenton County farm chosen held its initial farm field day in February 2024. There were 41 farm operators at this field day. The three primary topics covered were pregnancy checking, selecting good genetic stock, and weed control in pastures and hayfields. Based on early feedback from those attending, all of the participants found the farm field day topics very timely and very applicable on their own farms. Four farmers called the Extension office for more information on bull selection, and two farmers were interested in learning more about the labs where they could submit blood samples for pregnancy checking their own cows.



Program Outcomes

The Kenton County Extension office offered a Beef Marketing class in early September. Nearly all of the participants indicated that they had learned a management strategy that they were ready to immediately implement on their farm. Two cattle farms from Kenton County indicated that they are now going to reassess their freezer beef pricing strategy because their pricing structure was not as profitable as it should be. One cow calf operator from Kenton County is now considering adding heifers to his herd because he had been calculating his input costs incorrectly.

HORTICULTURE



Brandon George
Horticulture Agent



Mary Ann Schultz
Horticulture Assistant

Northern Kentucky Hosts the 2024 Kentucky Master Gardener Conference

On September 24-26, 2024, Kenton, Campbell, and Boone Counties cohosted the State Master Gardener Conference. Each NKY horticulture extension team along with their respective Master Gardener groups were tasked with event planning committees. Kenton County was responsible for organizing speakers for the event as well as setting up for and arranging workshops and tours. A unique experience was getting a tour of the DHL plant inspection facilities for the NKY/Cincinnati airport, which was unique, and memorable for most of the master gardeners who attended.

The conference was held at the Boone County Extension Enrichment Center with preconference tours occurring in the Enrichment Center as well as at the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Airport. A total of 175 Master Gardeners came from across the state to attend the conference. Speakers came from the University of Kentucky Forestry and Entomology Departments, Mt. St. Joseph University, Ohio University, USDA APHIS, the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens, and others.

Program Outcomes

Some of our survey results are highlighted here, as a result, 81% of the participants shared that they plan to implement one or more things they learned at the conference to do in the garden. A few shared: "Be aware of invasive (insects and plants) and help others", "I plan to try Bonsai now", "Change some of my landscape by adding more pollinator plants and propagate White Oak trees to give away", "Being aware of poisonous plant in my landscape".

78% of the respondents share some of their most valuable takeaways from the conference:

"The importance of houseplants from a health perspective", "Time to connect with other gardeners from around the state" and "Made me think outside of the box when planting".

"Volunteer leaders are essential for Extension to extend our presence throughout the community. The Master Gardener program is not just a training that allows gardeners to learn new skills, it is a way for gardeners to build community and help the public through volunteering."

Many of our Master Gardeners have been volunteers with us for years, helping to maintain demonstration gardens, write gardening articles for the public, teach horticulture classes, and much more. These Master Gardeners love to get together to see what other groups are doing and to share their common love of growing plants.

To allow Master Gardeners to further their passion for gardening and learn from each other, horticulture agents and staff from Boone, Kenton, and Campbell counties hosted the Annual Kentucky Master Gardener Conference in Northern Kentucky. The theme for the conference was Energize, Enrich, Engage. The mission was to give Master Gardeners the fuel to continue pursuing their passion of helping the public.

FAMILY CONSUMER SCIENCE



Denise Donahue
Family Consumer Science Agent

"Stitching Away Stress: The Therapeutic Power of Quilting"

Stress has a profound effect on both individual well-being and community cohesion. Elevated stress levels contribute to a range of physical and mental health issues, including high blood pressure, anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders. These challenges affect personal health and lead to increased healthcare costs and reduced workforce productivity.

To help address these concerns, the Kenton County FCS Program introduced a Beginning Quilting Class, offering a creative and engaging way for individuals to develop new skills while fostering a sense of community. Beyond skill development, quilting has been shown to have therapeutic benefits, including stress and anxiety reduction, which contribute to overall well-being.

The Beginning Quilting Class was promoted in the Fall and Spring editions of the What's Happening publication, reaching all Kenton County residents. As a result:

- 15 individuals participated in the class, with 10 continuing to the advanced project class to refine their quilting skills.
- The course was led by two Master Quilters from our Homemakers program, ensuring high-quality instruction.
- 70% of participants reported that learning to quilt provided them with a valuable opportunity to slow down and focus on a new skill.
- 60% expressed interest in continuing to the project class to further develop their quilting expertise.

By providing this program, the Kenton County FCS Program is not only enriching lives through skill-building but also strengthening social connections and improving overall community well-being.



Stacy Whelan
FSC Assistant



FAMILY CONSUMER SCIENCE



Joan Bowling
Family Consumer Science Agent

Addressing Senior Food Insecurity and Nutrition

In Kenton County, where 59% of older adults fall below the Federal Poverty Level, the Family and Consumer Science agent has taken proactive steps to combat senior food insecurity and improve nutrition. A series of nutrition programs were implemented at four senior citizen centers. Preliminary verbal surveys of participants across these locations revealed several concerning trends, including:

- Lack of motivation to prepare home-cooked meals.
- The misperception that eating out is economical.
- Increased consumption of processed foods.
- Fruit and vegetable consumption of less than two servings per day.

Program Outcomes

Fifty-four older adults participated in 10 educational sessions focusing on:

- Reading and understanding food labels.
- Adopting healthier eating habits.
- Safe food storage techniques.
- Food resource management practices, such as meal planning, price comparison, and grocery list creation.

Through the "Cook the Calendar" program, participants explored the nutritional and economic benefits of preparing meals from scratch using recipes from the "Plan.Eat.Move" initiative. Key outcomes from these sessions include:

- 56% of participants began using a grocery list while shopping.
- 86% implemented at least one safe food storage tip, reducing food waste at home.
- 10 individuals tried at least one new fruit or vegetable.
- 86% utilized one or more of the recipes shared during the sessions.
- 66% applied nutritional information to increase their fruit and vegetable consumption.

Future Plans

The success of this program highlights the importance of nutrition education for seniors. Moving forward, the nutrition education series will be expanded to reach underserved communities throughout Kenton County, ensuring broader access to resources that promote healthy eating and food security for older adults.

This initiative demonstrates the critical need for continued support and funding for programs addressing senior nutrition and food insecurity, as they play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for economically vulnerable populations.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Kenton County 4-H Youth attend the 100th Annual Teen Conference



4-H members at Teen Conference pose for a photo with agent Lori Clark

The 100th Annual Kentucky 4-H Teen Conference took place at the University of Kentucky from June 11th to 14th, 2024. The conference allowed participants to participate and improve their leadership and teamwork skills and communication abilities. In addition to fostering civic engagement, expanding knowledge in 4-H core content areas, and enhancing social skills through networking. The event provided an opportunity for youth to become acquainted with the University of Kentucky, aiding in their college and career readiness.

Program Outcomes

The 100th-year Teen Conference celebration garnered significant attention, drawing 588 participants to the University of Kentucky campus. Among them were 472 youth and 116 adults from 82 Kentucky counties. The event received sponsorship from esteemed organizations, including the University of Kentucky Martin Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Cooperative Extension Service 4-H Program, the Kentucky 4-H Foundation, Farm Credit Mid-America, the Kentucky Soybean Board, Kentucky Farm Bureau, and Field & Main Bank. Additionally, we collaborated with a 4-H Alumni who owns a small business to create impactful marketing materials for the centennial year. As part of our efforts, we secured a former 4-H Alumni as our keynote speaker for the 100th celebration. Furthermore, we worked closely with the Agriculture Communications department to strategically recruit major leaders and participants.



Lori Clark
4-H Youth Development
Agent



Vanessa Sturgill
4-H Assistant

4-H Youth Development, cont.



Shooting sports volunteers help a 4-H member find her aim



Volunteers help check in 4-H projects to the county fair



Diane Kelley
4- H Youth Development
Agent

Volunteers at the center of Extension

Volunteers are important to the process Cooperative Extension has in local communities. Volunteers are integral to the duties, functions, and tasks and possess varied and diverse knowledge, skills, and backgrounds (Radhakrishna & Ewing, 2011). The success of Extension programming is due, in part, to the dedication of a large cadre of volunteers (Smith, Dasher, & Klingborg, 2005). The U.K., Cooperative Extension Service and Kenton County Extension Council (CEC) volunteers plan and execute the educational and functional meetings required for Extension programming in Kenton County. The County Extension Council involves learning about local Cooperative Extension programming and committing to sharing knowledge, opinions, and mentoring other adult volunteers. The Extension Councils offer opportunities for individuals to gain experience in decision making, group process, local resources, and leadership. Two Kenton County volunteers were nominated for and an election was held to select the current council President. Their willingness and dedication to the Cooperative Extension program providing educational efforts benefiting youth, and a passion for helping families participate is exemplified by this process. The volunteers' contributions impact Kenton County where it is fundamentally the most important to the clientele – continuing education for adults and youth. The involvement of our local CEC members helped to impact our community by those willing to share the 2023 community assessment survey. Volunteers shared printed copies as well as the web address with coworkers, community groups, and employees in a group effort to help us collect legitimate, useable surveys. The results of the survey have been a source of interest among those who participated, sparking important conversations about programming efforts. The opportunities to consult with local experts regarding trends, resources expended by other organizations, and efforts being made by local governments will prevent unnecessary overlap and allow Kenton County CES to utilize our resources in the most beneficial ways. The CEC volunteers plan and execute the yearly meetings and the events sponsored will change to accommodate current county level events. The CEC volunteers work with all who attend the meetings regardless of their experience to educate them about the Extension program. They also work within the framework provided by the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service System including laws, rules, and guidelines. They encourage involvement with local clubs, county 4-H events, Homemakers Clubs, and CEC committees. The last two years have provided a resurgence among membership and currently there are 33 members actively attending local meetings.

4-H Youth Development, cont.

Kenton County 4-H's Progressive Agriculture Safety Day Draws 30 Youth

According to the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety, agriculture related incidents injure about 33 children a day and claim the life of one child every three days. And while much of Kenton County is urban, "Kentucky: By the Numbers" reports that 28% of land is still considered rural, and that Kenton County is home to 453 farms and the families who live on and work them (Zimmerman and McAlister, 2024). This means a considerable portion of Kenton County youth are regularly exposed to risks associated with rural life.

To address the issues of farm safety among youth and provide safety education to youth living in rural areas, Kenton County 4-H Livestock Club hosted a Progressive Agriculture Safety Day on October 26th, 2024. During a six-hour day, 4-H volunteers, senior 4-H and FFA members, and knowledgeable community members presented on 10 different safety topics, with an emphasis on preventing unsafe conditions. Topics covered included animal safety, ATV/UTV safety, firearm safety, lawn equipment safety, mental well-being and stress management, and more.

4-H members learned how to identify and deal with hazards on the farm, how to take responsibility for their own safety, respect parent's safety rules, and share safety tips with their family and friends. Approximately 80% of attendees (including youth presenters) reported via informal survey that they had learned something new about how to stay safe in their rural area.

The Kenton County 4-H's Progressive Agriculture Safety Day was hosted in collaboration with the Progressive Agriculture Foundation, the Kenton County Fair Board, and the Simon-Kenton High School FFA. In addition, members of the Kenton County Fair Board coordinated with Donato's Pizza to provide lunch for attendees, as well as Kenton Equipment, who supplied farm equipment to demonstrate safety features on. This program was made possible by exemplary community support for the health and safety of Kenton County youth.

References:

National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety (2022). 2022 Fact Sheet – Childhood Agricultural Injuries.

Marshfield Clinic Health System, Marshfield WI.

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Zimmerman, J. N., & McAlister, C. (n.d.). 2024 County Profiles.

Retrieved from <https://kybtn.ca.uky.edu/kybtn-data-series/2024-county-profiles>.



4-H Member practices knife safety skills with soap carving



Kaylen Greene-Purcell
4-H Assistant



Anna Meyers
4-H Youth Development
Agent

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Demetrius Stewart
Custodian



STAY CONNECTED WITH US

We are excited about the opportunities this year holds for community engagement and learning. Our calendar is filled with events, from 4-H programs that empower young people to develop life skills, to agriculture and horticulture classes that provide hands-on learning experiences. This summer, the Kenton County Fair promises to be a highlight, as will the 4-H Youth Camp with an immersive experience for young participants. We are committed to making each event educational, enjoyable, and meaningful for all.



For more information on classes and events :



Kenton County Cooperative Extension Service



Kenton County 4-H



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