

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Highlights from OSU Extension in Fairfield County

July 2020

“The News” Blog

Fairfield County Extension professionals found a new way to stay connected during COVID -19. We created the “The News” blog which highlights our Lancaster Eagle Gazette weekly submissions and the biweekly submissions to the Towne Crier.

In addition, we also highlight the radio interviews used for the 88.9FM WLRY Farm Page which plays every Saturday morning at 7:00 a.m. Many of those interviews highlight our 4-H and FFA youth as well as local ag-related business and industry. We also try to educate clientele about things to do in the yard and garden, what’s happening on the farm, and OSU Extension upcoming programs and events.

In the last 90 days the site has had over 2,507 views with 1,722 users. The average length of time a viewer spends on the site is 1 minute and 40 seconds. Obviously, our users have found something of interest in our efforts with this new blog. Interesting to note, the articles with the most social media activity included announcements regarding the Fairfield County Fair, interviews with 4-H youth and the on-line shopping experience at Lancaster Greenhouse interview. Given the success of this new attempt to stay connected during COVID-19, it is certainly a tool that we will continue to use. If you would like to connect with “The News,” simply follow along at: <https://u.osu.edu/thenews/>

Family and Consumer Sciences

Manage Your Money Email Challenge

In January, the Manage Your Money email challenge was launched. This challenge walked 126 participants through the Manage Your Money curriculum. Each week, a new lesson was covered and supported by email messages that highlighted the learning objectives and included money management tips as well as a video presentation to help connect the week’s information. The goal of the 6-week challenge was to improve financial literacy, while focusing on basic money management. A 3-month follow-up survey is currently being completed to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.



Food Preservation 101

Online webinar classes were presented by Jenny Lobb, FCS Educator, OSU Extension Franklin County assisted by Shannon Carter, FCS Educator, OSU Extension Fairfield



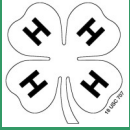
County and Melissa Sommers, Intern, OSU Extension Fairfield County. The classes covered all basic methods of food preservation including canning, freezing, drying and fermentation.



Summer Intern

Melissa Sommers, a senior at The Ohio State University, assisted with Family and Consumer Sciences programs this summer while expanding her knowledge of Extension and public needs. During her internship, she was able to assist at the Lancaster Farmers Market and Food Preservation webinars. She was able to interview professionals from Extension in Ohio and other states in order to learn about how Extension works across the nation. Melissa was also able to assist in creating virtual course content for SNAP-Ed classes.





4-H Happenings and News



4-H Day

On March 7, 2020, the 4-H Advisory Committee sponsored 4-H Day at the Fairfield County



Fairgrounds. This day is an open-house event that kicks-off the 4-H year and allows prospective and current 4-H members to experience "What is 4-H?" hands-on. Numerous clubs and 4-H members displayed project samples for visitors. These displays included animals and still projects as well as club displays with hands-on



activities such as cake decorating. The Camp Counselors, Fashion Nutrition Board, and Junior Leaders also had displays to provide information about county-wide opportunities. As families entered the event, family information was collected to help with club placement and potential members were given a Passport. As they visited different displays they were able to get the Passport stamped and earn a spin at the prize wheel. This year, over 140 families participated in 4-H Day with over 300 club referrals offered to potential new 4-H members.

Tractor Maintenance

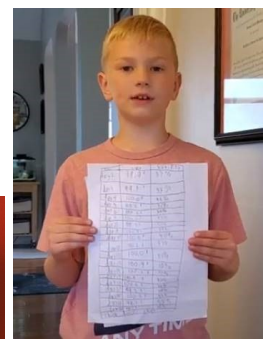
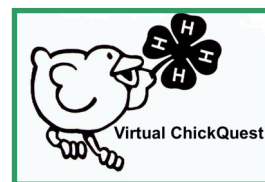
The county-wide Small Engine and Tractor Maintenance club organized in January 2020, with 31 members. Members were able to learn the parts of small engines and get hands-on experience with parts and tools in this specialized club experience.

Shooting Sports

Shooting Sports is a county-wide program that is designed to teach life skills to 4-H youth through the shooting sports curriculum and activities that will enable boys and girls to reach fullest potential as capable, caring and contributing citizens. Eighty youth members were able to complete the Archery discipline this January taught by trained 4-H certified instructors. Fairfield County also offers Hunting & Wildlife, Rifle, and Shotgun disciplines but these activities were cancelled for 2020 due to COVID-19.

Enrollment

The 2020-21 4-H enrollment period closed on May 1, 2020, with 1181 youth members and 225 volunteers. With the Stay-at-Home order and continued in-person meeting restrictions, 4-H clubs met virtually through Zoom, Facebook and Google Meet with assistance from the Extension office as needed.



Fairfield County 4-H Member keeps a daily log of incubator temperature and humidity levels in preparation for virtual chick hatching!



With in-person ChickQuest being cancelled when schools were closed and the Stay-at-Home order was issued, Leslie Cooksey, 4-H Educator, developed an online, virtual opportunity to make sure students could still learn from home by utilizing Zoom and a private YouTube channel. Materials were shared with 50 teacher/parent contacts from 10 Ohio counties as well as in Texas and Illinois. In addition, 41 videos were posted with a total of 1825 hits to the YouTube channel. On the two hatching days, which were live streamed, there were over 400 check-ins.



4-H Happenings and News



Virtual 4-H Camp: Quarantined in Space

As with many of our summer events, our traditional 4-H camps which are normally held at Alley Park and Tar Hollow were cancelled. Thirty camp counselors stepped up to the challenge and created a virtual camp experience for our 4-H members. The *Quarantined in Space* camp experience was created as a mission-based blog open to members age 5 - 18 years old at no cost. One-hundred three members registered for camp and were placed in one of six groups based on their age. Each group consisted of 15-18 campers and 5-6 counselors so that youth were able to interact with peers, learn more about camp, and continue camp traditions even while meeting virtually. Groups were able to utilize Flipgrid to talk to each other and share their camp experiences.

Each day of the 10-day camp, campers were assigned missions to complete and add to a Space Log. This allowed them to track their activities. Once completed, the log was submitted to the Extension office. All members that completed and submitted their Space Log will receive a Camp Gift Packet that will contain space-themed materials and a camp t-shirt.

Counselors were able to host two live Zoom meetings to meet with the campers where they shared, created chants and made skits.



Summer Judging



Summer Judging, as with many events, was impacted by COVID-19 as well as the cancellation of the Ohio State Fair. In order to keep members safe, Summer Judging was moved to a virtual format with a few in-person options for those members without reliable internet service. Over four days of judging, 275 projects were judged with 19 interviews conducted in-person and 256 interviews conducted through Zoom.

Each member and a judge were hosted by an OSU team member. Members were able to share electronic presentations or simply display a poster board with their project information. Since this was a live virtual interview, members and judges were able to interact which allowed for a more in-depth evaluation of the project and created an environment more similar to normal in-person judging. Each judge selected *Outstanding of the Day* and *Honorable Mention of the Day* award recipients each day. These members will be recognized virtually with announcements hosted by our teen board members. In addition, a virtual style revue was created with individual videos of members in the outfits they put together for each of their clothing projects.



Ag & Natural Resources

Pesticide and Fertilizer recertification training classes were held on January 9th and February 20th. Participants were able to complete the requirements necessary to renew their license with the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Fifty-six participants were able to renew their fertilizer license and fifty-two renewed their pesticide license.



The Fairfield County Local Foods Guide was updated in June. Please make sure you visit <https://fairfield.osu.edu/program-areas/agriculture-and-natural-resources/local-foods-guide> to check out the updates. We are always accepting updates and additions for review, visit go.osu.edu/FCLocalFoodsUpdate to let us know.



FAIRFIELD COUNTY LOCAL FOODS GUIDE



CFAES

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

“This group is such a bright ray of sunshine! Thank you every-one and hope our clouds pass soon.”

MGV Facebook Comment

Fairfield County Master Gardener Volunteers

Making a Difference for County Clientele

2019 Report

The value of MGV services in 2019

\$62,430

*Using the current national estimated dollar value of volunteer time of \$25.43 per hour, from Independent Sector

2455 hours

contributed by MGVS to OSUE and their communities

Project Teams Working at:

Fairfield County Ag Center
AHA Children's Museum
Fairfield Co. Fairgrounds Broad Street
Friends of Wagnall's Gardens
Green Machine Gardeners
Helping Hands In The Garden for Cancer Patients
Sherman House Gardens
Tranquility Garden at FMC



240 hours

Continuing education training

368 hours

were given back to MGV Teaching, Newsletter and Social Media Education

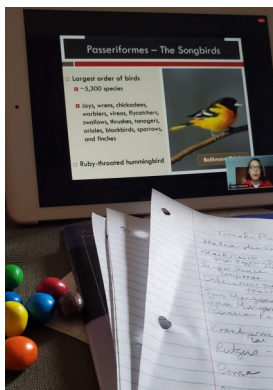
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New Master Gardener Volunteers trained

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Master Gardener Program

Master Gardener Volunteers were not able to be in the public gardens nor meet in-person during the Stay-at-Home order, but they were able to attend several Virtual Lunch and Learn webinars. These educational opportunities included programs ranging from pests and flowers to gardens and trees and herbs and were presented by experts in those fields.



Master Gardener Program—Sharing Garden Smiles...by the Numbers

One way the Fairfield County Master Gardeners found to stay connected during the COVID-19 Stay at Home order was by sharing SMILES from our gardens. The SMILE Challenge was posted to the Fairfield County Master Gardener Facebook Group page on March 21, 2020. The MGCV Coordinator request was very simple...look around you and find something that made you SMILE today. Since March 21, our Facebook group has increased the number of followers from 111 to 201 and increase of 81%. In addition, our group has had over 2,000 engagements and an increase of 63% in activity and education.



We have shared blooming plants in our gardens, offered educational guidance and provided information. You do not have to be a Master Gardener to join the group, you simply need to enjoy gardening and be respectful in your postings within the group.

A little bit of history, our Facebook MGCV group page started in late January of 2019. We have five active MGCV administrators. We have rules: Be Kind and Courteous. No Hate Speech or Bullying. No Promotions or Spam. Respect Everyone. We do ask a couple of membership questions: How long have you had an interest in gardening? Would you like to learn more about

the Master Gardener Program? Once the questions are answered, approval for membership is given by one the administrators. We currently have over 200 followers. It has been a very easy process and works very well for the Master Gardener Volunteers in Fairfield County.

In conclusion, from the Facebook Group Insight page we were able to see posts on Monday and Wednesday were the most viewed and the peak times for viewing was early in the morning (5 a.m. and late in the day, 8-10 p.m.). More importantly, the impact sharing of our Garden Smiles was amazing. We have shared learning opportunities, identified plants, and even invited our Soil and Water friends to share information during April's Native Plant month. More importantly we have seen MGCV's

spring blooming gardens in full glory, weeds we wish we did not have, blooming houseplants, our favorite container combinations and even our pillowcase city gardens trying to keep away Mother Nature's chill. The true blessing of this group event has not really been the increase in activity, but sharing lots of great gardening experiences and plants, we would have never shared had it not been for COVID-19 and our time at home to share our world and our SMILES with others.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Smith, Master Gardener Coordinator, Fairfield County





SNAP-ED UPDATES

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION

2020 Impact Update

Programming Highlights:

- ◆ In-person youth programming at Gorsuch Elementary, Tussing Elementary, Mt. Pleasant Elementary
- ◆ In-person adult programming at Fairfield County Job & Family Services.
- ◆ 1500 Chop Chop magazines and newsletters were distributed to Gorsuch West Elementary, Medill Elementary, Tussing Elementary, Millersport Elementary, Mt. Pleasant Elementary and the After School Programs of Lancaster's Summer Food Program.
- ◆ Over 1050 Celebrate Your Plate incentives were distributed to Meals on Wheels, Lutheran Social Services Food Pantry, and participants of the Lancaster/Community Action produce giveaway
- ◆ Over 300 Commodity Newsletters distributed each month
- ◆ Nutrition information shared at Lancaster Farmer's Market

Program Assistants Activity Highlights:

- ◆ Provided live Zoom lessons with local Kindergarten classes and for adult programming.
- ◆ Completed Continuing Education courses to learn how to meet the needs of the community.
- ◆ Offered recorded and live sessions to partner agencies

2019 Impact

Through a combination of adult and youth classes, 11,128 participants were reached by SNAP-Ed programming. An additional 56,092 participants were reached through indirect programming such as community events, newsletters and health fairs. SNAP-Ed programming participants learned how to make their lives healthier by:

- ◇ Using MyPlate to make healthy food choices
- ◇ Drinking water instead of sugar-sweetened drinks
- ◇ Being physically active at least 30 minutes most days of the week
- ◇ Using Nutrition Facts labels to guide food choices
- ◇ Planning meals ahead of time

HEALTHIER LIVES THROUGH NUTRITION EDUCATION





Fairfield County Extension Staff

Extension: We are here for YOU!

OSU Extension engages people to strengthen their lives and communities through research-based educational programming....

4-H Youth Development is a non-formal educational, youth development program offered to individuals age 5 and in kindergarten to age 19. It is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills as they work in partnership with caring adult volunteers to empower them to reach their full potential.

OSU Extension Community Development professionals work with communities and neighborhoods to educate and engage by applying cutting-edge, science-based knowledge and innovations to improve and enhance local businesses and communities.

Family and Consumer Sciences programs strive to create Better Lives, Stronger Communities by improving nutrition and food safety, enhancing health and wellness and managing family budgets and financial resources.

SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program) is a free nutrition education and obesity prevention program serving low-income adults and youth. It is funded by the Food Nutrition Service branch of the USDA. The focus audience is individuals and families eligible for SNAP.

Agriculture and Natural Resources programs provide Ohioans with resources and educational programs that focus on profitable and sustainable agriculture, a clean environment and proper stewardship of Ohio's natural resources.

Master Gardener Volunteer Program provides intensive training in horticulture to interested Ohio residents, who then volunteer their time assisting with educational programs and activities.



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