Preston County Annual Report 2018

Putting Knowledge to Work!

The West Virginia University Extension Service works to provide solutions in your community through key programs and resources, including agriculture and natural resources; 4-H and youth development; food and nutrition; health and wellness; financial planning; and home gardening. These research-based programs and services are available to all Preston County residents thanks to the tremendous support of our community members, local organizations, volunteers and local partners, including the Board of Education and County Commission.

Highlights

- Bill Shockey, WVU Extension Service ANR agent in Preston County, was awarded a SARE Research and Education grant titled “Obtaining Preventative Veterinary Services in Underserved Areas” for $67,092 over a two-year period. The objectives of the grant are to educate producers on the value of having a vet-client-patient relationship to keep animals healthy, and to provide producers tools to attract veterinarian services to underserved areas.

- David Hartley, WVU Extension Service 4-H agent in Preston County, served on the design team that developed the 4-H National Youth Science Day kit that was used by thousands of 4-H participants across the nation. This program is in partnership with National 4-H Council and Google.

- Extension Agent David Hartley served as director of the Older Members’ Conference, which serves 191 youths from 38 counties. Preston County was represented by 39 youths, the most of all counties, statewide.

- The entire Preston County WVU Extension Service staff were greatly involved in the Preston County Buckwheat Festival. From the more than 300 livestock exhibits to the more than 2,000 exhibits in Memorial North, the Extension office coordinates a substantial portion of festival activities, which is a yearlong commitment.

- 4-H Life, overseen by Megan Midcap, now the WVU Extension Service agent in Lewis County, is part of the national mentoring program designed to provide services to youths of incarcerated parents. These underserved clientele stand to benefit by participating in after-school and group mentoring programs, which have typically been unavailable to this vulnerable population.

4-H and Youth Development

Increased success in STEM and other academic subjects leads to positive outcomes for youths, as well as a reduction in risky behaviors. Because of their involvement in 4-H activities in Preston County, youths are more likely to obtain well-paying jobs, create their own businesses and contribute to the health and well-being of their communities.
4-H Camping

- 158 youths attended county 4-H camp.
- 39 youths attended a state 4-H camp.
- Preston County received the award for largest delegation at the Older Members’ Conference.

Traditional 4-H Programming and Clubs

- There are more than 335 active members in community 4-H club.
- More than 220 youths completed 4-H projects that were exhibited at the Buckwheat Festival.

Special Interest Programs

- One member attended National 4-H Congress in the fall of 2018, and two youths attended the National 4-H Youth Summit.
- One member attended the 2018 National 4-H Air Rifle Competition and one member will attend the 2019 National 4-H Archery Competition.
- More than 38 youths participated in Energy Express, a nutrition and summer literacy program for low-resource youths.
- The iRESPECT program was delivered in conjunction with the Preston County schools’ computer distribution program, which enabled fifth and ninth graders across the county to be exposed and become aware of cyberbullying and cyber safety.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Agriculture and natural resources programming addresses high priority efforts related to youth agricultural education, livestock health and marketing, local food production and farm-to-table initiatives, Master Gardener volunteers, farm management and grassland production.

- 173 junior exhibitors sold 293 head of livestock at the 2018 Preston County Buckwheat Festival Youth Livestock Sale for a total value of $358,952.10.
- A research project was initiated to determine the economic impact of livestock and educational exhibits at the Preston County Buckwheat Festival. Preliminary results indicated that more than $90,000 is spent on the festival grounds by livestock exhibitors, their family members and friends.
- Extension Agent Bill Shockey is involved in an educational program designed to improve the access of rural, part-time livestock producers to quality preventative veterinary services. Funding ($67,000 over a two-year period) has been awarded to conduct research and teaching programs to address the availability of local preventative veterinary services. He conducted a statewide producer survey, which generated more than 400 responses, designed to determine the current status of on-farm veterinary care.
- The Preston County WVU Extension office supported a farmer-initiated marketing coalition designed to increase local food consumption of institutional customers. In 2018, more than $25,000 of local food was purchased by local institutional customers, such as Preston County schools and West Virginia National Guard Mountaineer Challenge Academy.
- Master Gardeners reported more than 1,000 volunteer hours for Preston County residents by providing civic organization education, public park design, school science education, public flower care and many more activities.
Family and Community Development

- In 2018, more than 300 youths were encouraged to try a variety of healthy foods through nutrition education.
- Youths reported in the post-program evaluation that more than 50% liked vegetables and fruits.
- 43 Community Educational Outreach Service members conducted more than 3,800 hours of volunteer service in their Preston County communities in 2018.