Ritchie 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 Ritchie 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

- Stephanie Deem, the WVU Extension Service agent in Ritchie County, and WVU Ritchie County Extension Service staff and volunteers hosted Ritchie County Youth Ag Day for elementary school students, highlighting agriculture and farming. More than 300 youths were exposed to agricultural practices, information on food sources and fun agricultural activities. Smithville Elementary School students also participated in Heritage Day, which included homesteading and forgotten arts.
- WVU Ritchie County Extension Service faculty, staff and community volunteers successfully provided middle school and high school students lessons about college preparation, career readiness and financial planning, and provided elementary school students with hand hygiene and germ control education.
- WVU Ritchie County Extension Service faculty and staff offered a farmers market to elementary school students in Ritchie County in fall 2018.
- Stephanie Deem and members of the Ritchie County Youth Livestock Association hosted a fitting and grooming workshop for youths from Ritchie County and the surrounding counties. Participants were given the opportunity to learn how to groom livestock, as well as show and care for their animals during the workshop.
- WVU Ritchie County Extension Service faculty and staff participated in a webinar to learn about blood pressure self-check stations and implemented a self-check station in the office. To promote the self-check station to the community, the Ritchie County office hosted an open house.
- Stephanie Deem, along with Zona Hutson, WVU Extension Service agent in Doddridge County, hosted a canning workshop in September 2018. Community members who wished to learn about canning and food preservation were given the opportunity to attend the workshop. Safe food preserving practices and tips, as well as a hands-on canning experience, were offered.
Stephanie Deem hosted youth livestock judging practices throughout late winter and early spring in 2018. Judging participants attended the West Virginia Beef Expo, where the team placed 40th.

Stephanie Deem and other WVU Extension Service faculty began researching youth all-terrain vehicle exposure, safety behaviors and crash behaviors in April 2018. Middle school and high school students throughout a four-county area have been surveyed concerning four-wheeler safety and behaviors.

Stephanie Deem and Jodi Smith, WVU Extension Service agent in Wood County, are currently working on a 4-H program lesson focused on making face-to-face connections with friends and family in a world where adults and youths are becoming more disconnected through technology.

4-H and Youth Development

Activities:

Camping

Ritchie County 4-H continues to show growth across our 4-H programs, with increases in county 4-H enrollment over the past year. In 2018, 130 campers attended Ritchie County's weeklong, overnight 4-H camp. During the week, three charters completed the program.

At Ritchie County 4-H camp, campers have structured time for educational and physical activities, as well as learning about time management, problem solving, reasoning, responsibility, self-motivation, decision-making and integrity.

Four teen leaders were involved in teaching classes during camp.

Campers are exposed to a variety of class options, where they may learn cosmetology, writing, painting, cooking, woodworking, electricity, sewing and shooting sports.

Community members are also a vital part of the Ritchie County 4-H camping experience. Our 4-H volunteers provide classes throughout the week and serve as camp counselors, assigned to stay in the dorms, help provide meals, supervise sports activities and act as mentors to the campers. During 2018’s camp, there were more than 50 volunteers serving as class instructors, counselors and providing a positive camping experience for the county's youths.

4-H School-Based Programs

In 2018, WVU Extension Service agent Stephanie Deem has spent many hours in classrooms throughout Ritchie County schools. She, along with WVU Ritchie County Extension Service staff and volunteers, have provided the Glitterbug hand hygiene and germ control educational activity to pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students, Reality Store career readiness programing to middle and high schools students, and Ritchie County Youth Ag Day for elementary school students hosted at the Ritchie County 4-H grounds. There was an opportunity to reach more than 1,000 youths in just the teaching programs conducted.
Energy Express

- Energy Express has successfully been conducted in Ritchie County for over 16 years. In 2018, Ritchie County was able to offer two sites for elementary school children to participate in Energy Express, which were held at Smithville Elementary School and Ritchie County High School. Normally, Creed Collins Elementary School is utilized as one of the two Energy Express sites in the county, but due to work at the school, the site was unavailable last summer.

- 72 students attended the two Energy Express sites for the six-week program, with 66 individuals volunteering to work with the students through the program. Energy Express helps elementary school students with the “summer slide” issue, where they lose reading skills during the summer months. Youths are given opportunities to enhance reading skills, community awareness, community service and physical activity throughout the day, while also receiving a nutritional lunch. Students receive a book to take home and keep each week, which they can use to practice their reading skills while they are not at school and participate in a community service project each year.

Traditional 4-H Programming and Clubs

- Ritchie County had 175 youths enrolled in community 4-H clubs in 2018. There were six community clubs, located in Auburn, Cairo, Harrisville, Pennsboro, Pullman and Smithville, as well as one special interest club. Community club leaders assist club members with conducting a business meeting, assist in planning educational programs for monthly meetings, assist club members in completing community service projects and working on project books. Youths are exposed to Robert's Rules of Order for business meetings, as well as public speaking opportunities, community service, leadership, responsibility, decision-making and time management.

Special Interest Programs

- Currently, Ritchie County has one special interest club, which is the Ritchie County shooting sports club. Before 2017, the club was offered as an additional offering for county 4-H’ers, but in 2017, the shooting sports instructors decided to offer it as a stand-alone club.

- Guidelines for club enrollment are the same as the traditional community clubs, with 4-H’ers hosting a business meeting, participating in 4-H projects each year and serving as club officers. Additionally, the club offers 4-H’ers the ability to learn about safe and proper use of firearms, target practicing and STEM activities. The club not only meets monthly, but there also are shooting sports classes during 4-H camp. The goal is to train youth to participate state wide in shooting sports competitions.

Beef Judging Team

- Over the past three years, Ritchie County has offered 4-H members an opportunity to learn about beef judging. WVU Extension Service agent Stephanie Deem has partnered with Ritchie County High School FFA advisor Wendy Knopp, Ritchie County youth livestock organizers and volunteers to offer the beef judging team. Any Ritchie County 4-H member or FFA member can participate in the judging practices and competition.
During the 2018 West Virginia Beef Expo competition at WVU Jackson's Mill, a group of four 4-H’ers, ranging in age from 9-13, participated in the junior judging competition. In the senior division, FFA members participated with a four-person team. We hope to continue to grow this aspect of the Ritchie County 4-H and FFA program over the next several years.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Youth Agriculture

The Ritchie County youth livestock program has continued to grow in Ritchie County. In 2018, there were 52 4-H exhibitors who sold 68 animals. Youths attended monthly livestock meetings where exhibitors discussed their animals, program leaders taught them about safe animal husbandry and they had a chance to participate in the youth quality assurance program, which has helped build and strengthen the program over the years. In 2018, there was a fitting and grooming workshop where participants were able to experience hands-on fitting and grooming techniques and learn about showing, training and caring for their animals.

Ritchie County Cooperative Marketing Association Inc. Calf Sale

WVU Ritchie County Extension Service staff worked with the county’s cooperative marketing association to host the annual calf sale. During the sale, there were 205 steers sold, at an average weight of 465.25 pounds and an average price of $1.27 per pound. A total of 108 heifers were sold with an average weight of 423.50 pounds and an average price of $1.24 per pound.

Winter Dinner Meetings

Ritchie County has been fortunate over the past several years to offer winter dinner meetings for farmers, interested community members and individuals from surrounding counties. Last year, Ritchie County offered a woods and wildlife meeting, which was well attended by community members, as well as others from surrounding counties. We hope to continue to offer winter dinner meetings in Ritchie County to provide valuable information to farmers and others interested in agricultural matters each year.

Local Foods

Ritchie County offers a farmers market every Saturday, from May through October each year. Local farmers and crafters provide a variety of offerings, including farm fresh eggs, grass-fed beef, free-range chicken, maple syrup, locally harvested honey, nuts, flowers and fresh fruits and vegetables. WVU Extension Service is a supporter of this program and will continue to offer services and support to the Ritchie County farmers market.

Family and Community Development

Community Educational Outreach Service

There are four CEOS community clubs in Ritchie County with 40 members total. The CEOS members volunteer their time, money and energy at different events throughout the county. They also are present at the Ritchie County Fair and Expo each year, where they offer information about the services they provide and the individual community clubs.
Economic Development

- Stephanie Deem, WVU Extension Service agent, currently serves on the Ritchie County Economic Development Authority board of directors. By serving on the board of directors for this organization, Deem is able to provide input on community and economic development, as well as tourism, for the county. Deem has resources available from WVU Extension Service, which can be utilized by the development authority in community development and tourism.