

Monroe County Annual Report 2020

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 Monroe 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

- Monroe County supports 11 community 4-H clubs with 145 enrolled members.
- The Monroe County Calf Pool marketed \$490,624.79 in cattle, which was a \$78,423.68 increase from 2019.
- As part of the COVID-19 Market Hog Program, 440 hogs (\$340,000 value), were provided to citizens in the Greenbrier Valley as a food source for families.
- 194 potential producers learned about the financial risks involved in hemp production and the importance of marketing their product for success.

4-H/Youth Development

Camping

- 22 county 4-H members participated in the virtual Monroe County Camp URLinked. 16 adult volunteer camping staff also participated.
- 14 campers earned unique state headbands by completing camping activity requirements during the camping experience.
- Two 4-H'ers participated in the statewide charting program. One successfully completed the program and will receive his charting pin at the next in-person camp in Monroe County.
- The Monroe County 4-H agent created a virtual camp lesson for shooting sports that was used across the state during Camp URLinked in the summer.

Traditional 4-H Programming and Clubs

- Monroe County supports 11 community 4-H clubs with 145 enrolled members.
- 24 vetted adult volunteers worked in the community club setting to mentor members.
- 24 4-H'ers submitted posters to the county poster contest. Seven posters advanced and competed in the state contest earning three blue ribbons and four red ribbons.
- Two 4-H'ers participated in the virtual county presentation day contests: one in the 4-H Pledge Contest and one in the Junior Demonstration. The Junior Demonstration went on to compete in the state virtual contest earning a red ribbon.

Special Interest Programs

- Five youths participated in the state Shooting Sports Air Rifle Championships.
 - One youth finished the qualifying rounds as the number one shooter in the senior division, but elected not to shoot at the state finals in order to compete in the state History Bowl Competition.

- One junior division youth competed in Morgantown finishing seventh in the state finals.
- 14 youths and parents across the state participated in a 4-H project virtual workshop in food preservation, which focused on the basics and pressure canning.

Energy Express

- One site served 72 Monroe County youths for the virtual 6-week program.
- 10 college-aged AmeriCorps members served the two sites and extended their service to include summer foods distribution assistance at each site.

4-H Youth Judging and Competitive Event Programming

- Two 4-H'ers competed in the state virtual Livestock Judging Competition, finishing in second and third place.
- Two of the four individuals on the West Virginia State Livestock Judging Team that competed in the National Virtual Competition were from Monroe County. There were 65 individuals that competed. Lauren Ballard was second in placings overall, and the team finished fifth nationally out of 15 teams.
- Two virtual West Virginia Quiz Bowl teams were formed, comprised of four individuals each. Monroe County had three 4-H'ers on the first team and two on the second. Teams learned about livestock breeds, animal nutrition, reproduction, animal husbandry, etc.

Other 4-H Youth Ag Activities

- The Ham, Bacon & Egg Show and Sale was held virtually. 17 youths participated in the Greenbrier Monroe Sale, which grossed \$46,450.
- 15 youths participated in the virtual show and online sale held by the Greenbrier Monroe Youth Livestock Association for project animals. The sale totaled \$117,986.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Monroe County Calf Pool Program

- The Monroe County Calf Pool marketed \$490,624.79 in cattle, a \$78,423.68 increase from 2019.
- Five new producers participated in the pool and gained knowledge of directing marketing of livestock and direct marketing opportunities.
- 315 steers marketed netted on average \$49.05/head more than the average at the Graded Barn Sale for that time period.
- 253 heifers marketed netted on average \$59.02/head more than the average at the Graded Barn Sales for that time period.
- Total number of cattle marketed increased by 43 head.
- Steers averaged \$935.44/head at an average of 611 pounds; heifers averaged \$774.56/head at an average of 587 pounds.
- The advantage of this program in premiums have totaled \$30,383.36 with this return being directly returned to the producer when compared to the statewide livestock market averages.

COVID-19 Market Hog Service Project

- 440 hogs, which was 85,000 pounds of pork (\$340,000 value), were provided to citizens in the Greenbrier Valley.
- A Facebook advertisement had 209 shares, 36 reactions and 76 comments, reaching 21,799 people in one day. Another Facebook post had 555 shares, 102 comments and 316 reactions, reaching 84,729 people.
- A follow-up Facebook post after the first load of hogs was received had 555 shares, 102 comments and 316 reactions, reaching 84,729 people before the program ended.
- Post surveys showed 56% of participants processed at home with 64.8% of the hogs processed at home; 44% of participants found a processor with 35.2% of the hogs professionally processed; and 60.8% of participants had their hogs further processed (cured, smoked, etc.).

Hemp Production Educational Program

- Four educational programs were held on the topic of hemp production.

- Three agriculture dinner meetings covering hemp production reached a total of 146 individuals: Mercer County – 29; Summers County – 46; Nicholas County – 71.
- A presentation during the West Virginia Small Farm Conference reached 48 individuals.
- A total of 194 potential producers learned to be very cautious concerning the financial risks involved in hemp production and that marketing of their product is critical for their success.

Beef Trans 4 Financial Management Program for Cow/Calf Producers

- One virtual program was held for Hampshire County beef producers.
- Five one-on-one consultations were held online and virtually.

Families and Health

- Monroe County WVU Extension assisted with 24 weeks of food distribution to school-aged children that was coordinated by the Monroe County Coalition for Children and Families.
- 51 students at Mountain View School learned about personal finances through the Build A Budget program.
- 48 adult learners participated in one or more of two virtual food preservation workshops covering the basics and pressure canning.

Community Educational Outreach Service

- Monroe County WVU Extension supported four CEOS community clubs: Hillsdale, Lindside, Monroe Connections and Sinks Grove.
- Four members were recognized for significant years of membership: Carol Vass and Susie Wickline - 50 years; Margery Pence - 60 years; Edna Burwell - 70 years.

Community Development/Tourism/Economic Development

Visitors Guide and AmeriCorps

- Monroe County WVU Extension secured \$43,100 to assist with the county's tourism efforts. The funds will support two AmeriCorps members for two years and produce a 48-page Monroe County Visitors Guide. This will be the first time anything like this has been created to promote this rural county.
- One AmeriCorps member will work in the area of heritage tourism, while the other will work to strengthen the connections between the community and the Monroe County Board of Education's radio station.

Branding Education

- The Monroe County FCD agent held a statewide branding webinar focusing on building a brand during the COVID pandemic. The webinar resulted in the agent working one-on-one with the Monroe County Public Library to begin a rebranding effort.
- Also, one-on-one work with a glass artisan helped her go from essentially off the grid to having a social media presence and a website.

Union Area Chamber of Commerce "Stimulus Package" Program

- The Monroe County FCD agent worked with business members, primarily concentrated in the Union area, to establish "stimulus package" promotions to build their social media following in order to combat business losses due to COVID. Connected more than 20 businesses, which resulted in an increased following on each of their pages. More than \$1,000 in items and gift certificates were awarded to four recipients to encourage local spending. Gift certificates were secured with donor funds and the Union Area Chamber of Commerce to prevent small local businesses from incurring large advertising expenses.