

Mineral 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 Mineral 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

- 27 AmeriCorps members served 170 youths through Energy Express for six weeks during the summer to help them stay connected and educated. In addition to literacy support, Mineral County youths received 10,200 meals and 1,020 books.
- Community members stayed connected during the pandemic through a variety of virtual program offerings. Participants reported learning new information and feeling less isolated.

4-H/Youth Development

Activities:

4-H SPIN Clubs

- New, virtual 4-H Special Interest (SPIN) clubs were offered for 4 - 6 weeks during the fall on agriculture, CSFirst Scratch Coding, Global Foods, Healthy Snacks, photography and This is 4-H.
- 89 youths participated and the pre/post evaluation showed gains in knowledge on all topics.
- Participants reported learning a variety of skills. For example, participants wrote a computer program in scratch, learned how to sauté food or learned to take a landscape photo.
- Youths reported that they felt safe, and they believed an adult cared about them and their success. They were motivated to be involved with their community, and they enjoyed working with others. We now have evidence that the Positive Youth Development constructs can be achieved in a virtual experience.

Traditional 4-H Programming

- 225 youths participated in 4-H club programs with most clubs offering virtual club experiences. Members joined in a variety of statewide 4-H project workshops and SPIN club experiences. 4-H members and volunteers gained news skills.

Energy Express

- 170 students participated in Energy Express at three sites in Mineral County where they gained an average of 3.1 months in broad reading achievement.
- Youths received 10,200 meals and 1,020 free books.
- 27 college students serving as AmeriCorps members gained valuable teaching experience while earning a living allowance and money for college.
- \$124,345 in local, state and federal funds were secured for this program.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

4-H Agriculture Youth Programs

- Mineral County youth livestock partners and volunteers hosted a successful in-person 4-H/FFA Livestock Show. There was \$54,845 in sales from the sale of animals for 4-H and FFA exhibitors. The average species price per pound was higher than the previous four years.

Local Foods

- In May, a statewide market hog program assisted pork producers in the Midwest region who were unable to get hogs slaughtered due to large slaughter facilities being shut down.
- Hogs brought to the state for the eastern panhandle:
 - 531 hogs were provided to a total of 331 families.
 - It is estimated that the yield was approximately 95,000 lbs of pork protein.
- A virtual farmers market was offered for the first time in Mineral County.

Agriculture Education Programs

- A state-wide Beginning Farmer program was started. It included the following:
 - 28 beginning knowledge fact sheets
 - 12 videos
 - 15 virtual instructional courses
 - Of the 58 participants, more than 80 percent reported an increase in knowledge and intent to begin a garden/produce venture in 2021.
- A virtual Women in Agriculture class was coordinated with 38 participants in October. Participants reported an increase in farm financial understanding and confidence.

- 14 agriculture education videos were filmed and published (low tunnels, sprayer calibration, weed control, pruning, etc.) outside of the Beginning Farmer program. The videos were used to train applicators on proper pesticide safety and protocol.

Families and Health

Health/Nutrition/Food Safety:

- 24 residents participated in Dining with Diabetes, and most participants reported behavior changes including increased physical activity and healthier eating.
- 48 people received basic nutrition education and reported increased knowledge in menu planning, grocery shopping and basic cooking skills.
- 367 students learned about proper handwashing. 76 percent of participants demonstrated the proper technique.

Community Partnerships:

- There were 230 CEOS members who stay connected during the pandemic through regularly scheduled CEOS educational lesson programs and book clubs.

Family Nutrition Program

- 450 mini greenhouse kits were delivered to area schools and libraries to help children learn how to grow microgreens.
- Seeds were packaged and delivering seeds to more than 300 families in Mineral County as part of the Grow This! WV Garden Challenge.