

Pocahontas 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 Pocahontas 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

- Pocahontas County's small cooperative livestock market served more than 200 customers and marketed over \$700,000 in livestock. With this number of contacts, the market reaches nearly 65% of the agriculture producers in the county. Additionally, the market and WVU Extension Service collaborated with veterinary services to provide opportunities for producers to pregnancy check cattle and complete breeding soundness exams of their bulls.
- Pocahontas County had 148 active 4-H members and six community 4-H clubs. These members completed educational projects, community service, camping activities, presentations, public speaking, photo and poster exhibitions, project fairs, livestock shows and sales, and the Ham and Bacon sale, despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4-H/Youth Development

Camping

- 108 4-H members participated in our "Keeping the Spirit Alive" Camp in a Box program. This innovative program developed pathways to reach all county 4-H members regardless of their access to the internet or electronic devices. This received recognition on the state level with an Award of Excellence.
- 47 members participated in the online portion of our county 4-H camp, Camp URLinked.

4-H School-based Programs

- More than 2,400 "Try This at Home" STEM kits were sent home with Pocahontas County elementary, middle and high school students to supplement virtual education during the pandemic.
- Garden-based education was provided at Marlinton Elementary school garden and Marlinton Middle School high tunnel.
- Energy Express summer reading and nutrition program at Marlinton Elementary School served 32 youths and provided a quality summer service opportunity for four AmeriCorps members. Participants received instruction in word identification, reading comprehension, fluency and broad reading.
- 80 3rd through 5th grade students used the "Know Your State" West Virginia History 4-H book.
- Three middle school science teachers used the "Kitchen Chemistry" 4-H project book to provide virtual school activities for their students.

- Active Walkways were painted at two elementary schools. 250 students at Marlinton Elementary and 90 students at Hillsboro Elementary were able to use the walkways during physical education class and recess.

Traditional 4-H Programming and Clubs

- 4-H enrollments transitioned to the 4h.zsuite.org electronic enrollment and management for clubs and members. Step-by-step instructions were developed and assistance was provided to ensure a smooth transition to the new system for members and club leaders.
- Maintained 35 vetted county volunteers, six 4-H clubs and 14 club leaders.
- Created and mailed monthly packets to all enrolled 4-H members to support virtual club activities and increase member enrollment and participation.
- 49 photo entries and 20 poster entries were submitted in the county contest. The county was well represented with seven posters and 28 photos moving to the state competition.
- 57 4-H'ers submitted 106 completed project books/record guides and 42 4-H projects in a wide variety of project areas.
- 42 blue ribbon 4-H project exhibits were showcased in storefront windows in Marlinton.

Special Interest Programs

- The 4-H agent worked with the Eastern Region of West Virginia 4-H agents to teach virtual special interest (SPIN) clubs to 4-H'ers across the state.
- Marlinton Elementary School Garden Club had a successful garden with community volunteers and Energy Express AmeriCorps members maintaining the garden.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Pork Project

- Used market hogs from midwestern producers to provide 440 hogs to local citizens, representing more than 160 families in our area. In total, WVU Extension agents were able to move more than 1,665 market hogs to West Virginia families.
- It is estimated that the yield of these animals provided approximately 320,000 pounds of pork protein to our clients (this program was replicated by private businesses to deliver more than 1,600 market hogs to area families in the Greenbrier Valley).

Individual Consultations

- More than 100 walk-in/call-in inquiries were satisfied with answers or solutions to their agriculture-related questions about soils, plant and insect identification, integrated pest management, biology and plant pathology.
- More than 500 soil test results were returned to clients. The agent helped producers collect over 100 samples using Extension's soil probes and conducted more than 100 result consultations with amendment recommendations, cost analysis and application recommendations.
- More than 60 plant pathology issues and 40 entomology issues were addressed with IPM recommendations.
- Conducted more than 20 site visits for fruit tree, grape and blueberry pruning and grafting demonstrations.
- Visited over 10 sites for livestock forage sample collections using Extension's forage probe.
- Conducted more than 10 site visits for livestock management issues (health, vaccinations, pregnancy checks, BSEs, castrations and evaluations).
- Consulted on more than 10 conservation programs by aiding producers in completing applications to receive program support.

Other Agricultural Work

- Residents used the online Master Gardener training series, resulting in 12 new trainees.
- Conducted an evaluation of landowner interest in hunting leases in the Greenbrier Valley. This is a current research project that will include a mailed survey to gauge property owner interest

in leasing hunting rights on their property. This survey is undergoing the IRB process and will go out this spring.

- Presented poster on 2019 data at the 2020 NACAA and was a national finalist. Production reduced by over 90% in the area in 2020. Market demand has been flooded, reducing profit margins and feasibility.
- Held three educational dinner meetings for more than 100 producers, where they earned over 300 hours of continuing education for pesticide licenses.
- Held virtual zoom sessions as part of the statewide pesticide training for ROW workers (more than 500 participants).
- Produced a segment of the statewide pesticide video on forest pesticides, viewed by approximately 500 private applicators annually.
- Pocahontas County Farmers Market has three market locations where 20 producers market their produce, meat and eggs throughout the county and region. WVU Extension provided market member training and support.
- Held statewide grazing training for 30 agriculture agents in West Virginia in collaboration with a local farm operation.

Families and Health

- 40 adults learned about heart health through educational handouts and heart-healthy fruit and yogurt valentines. Love Your Heart information was also sent to 35 Community Educational Outreach Service members.
- 35 CEOS members worked to improve their skills in leadership, personal development, nutrition, food safety, family life and community service.
- More than 25 participants received food preservation and gardening education.
- In partnership with Grow Appalachia Linwood, agents built and maintained the Marlinton Community Garden. Hands-on educational opportunities and demonstrations were provided to 11 gardeners and their families.
- 120 past participants in the Walk 100 Miles in 100 Days Challenge received educational information about the benefits of walking to improve their health.
- Agent assisted with school meal distributions to ensure youth received nutritious foods.

Safety and Health

- Assisted with registration at county health department clinics, where more than 800 vaccines were administered. Aided local health officials in creating a vaccine call list to ensure additional vaccines were used from each clinic.
- Distributed a face mask to every 4-H'er, provided face masks to the Wellness Center and maintained a safe, healthy work environment following COVID protocols.

Community Development/Tourism/Economic Development

- Agent served on Marlinton's Vacant Lot Committee, which helped create Discovery Junction community greenspace as part of the WVU Mon Forest Towns initiative.
- Coordinated the Drama, Fairs and Festivals program for the County Commission, which promotes events that increase county tourism and exposes people to cultural enrichment activities. In 2020, \$117,050 was distributed to 19 events.