Mercer County Annual Report 2019

Putting Knowledge to Work!

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 Mercer 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Adults</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag Literacy</td>
<td>Families &amp; Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,213</td>
<td>256</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ag Safety Day</td>
<td>Agricultural Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>741</td>
<td>485</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kids Farmers Markets</td>
<td>Senior Food Vouchers</td>
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<td>1,277</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-H Program</td>
<td>4-H Volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,756</td>
<td>100+</td>
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<td>4-H Camp</td>
<td>Poultry Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>176</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Families &amp; Health</td>
<td>Senior Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,130</td>
<td>174</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-H Health Ambassadors</td>
<td>Concord Students</td>
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<td>260+</td>
<td>18</td>
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Mercer County’s population has approximately 59,131 residents with a school-age population of 8,810 students. WVU Mercer County Extension offered programming in every elementary school and high school in 2019.

4-H and Youth Development

Camping & Clubs

- We held two weeks of residential 4-H camps, and the younger camp was at capacity. Youth rank this program high in essential elements (belonging, mastery, generosity and independence) that are important for youth to become successful adults.
- A recent study conducted by WVU Extension Service of younger 4-H alumni report that they received all aspects of 21st century job skills through 4-H. This was across all program areas but was highest in community club programming.
- 4-H teen leaders built a gaga pit for the 4-H camp facility that was a hit with 4-H members and others that utilize the facility.

Special Interest Programs

- A grant was secured to support our three 4-H robotics teams ranging from K-12.
- 10 Mercer County youth were trained as health ambassadors. They worked with more than 250 youth to choose healthy activities instead of substances. Another two-year grant was written and received from National 4-H Council to support our community to fight the drug abuse epidemic.
The 4-H program has great collaboration with Bluefield State College and Concord University involving 126 youth. Several departments at Concord University hosted a 4-H winter camp that focused on science and technology activities. Our annual 4-H leadership training was held at Bluefield State College.

**Agriculture and Natural Resources**

**Farm Management**

- 238 different producers have attended Mercer County dinner meetings between 2009 and 2019. 162 people attended this year’s dinner meeting.
- Largest producer-identified impacts:
  - fertilizer usage
  - mowing for weed control
  - soil sampling
  - changes in soil practices
  - changes in grazing practices
- Mercer County participation from 2010-2020 yielded funding to cover meal & meeting room:
  - $2,000 in from the Northeast Center for Risk Management Education
  - $2,100 from the Southern Soil Conservation District
  - $29,000 in local funding — $5,300 of which was generated in 2019.

**Local Foods**

- The Mercer County Tailgate Produce Market sold $28,943 that provided income to local farm families. 200 senior food vouchers were distributed to provide free fresh fruits, vegetables and honey to area senior citizens.
- The current regional grant project utilizes $10,000 in outside funding to provide education, training and free poultry coups, as well as birds and feed to severely impoverished residents in Southern West Virginia. This helps 18 families establish both a food and income source for their families. Approximately 50 dozen eggs per month are donated back to the participating food pantry by one of the producers.
- Seven elementary schools participated in the Mercer County Kids Farmers Market program in 2019 with 1,277 students purchasing $7,222 of fresh produce from local producers.
- 11 Master Gardener volunteers provided 605 service hours in 2019 with an economic value of over $10,914.

**Safety and Health**

- Two Progressive Agriculture Safety Days reached 741 regional youths in Mercer and Summers Counties. This program is also part of a grant project that recruited $9,100 in funding and provided bicycle helmets and education to 1,400 local youths in an attempt to increase helmet usage.

**Family and Health**

**Adults:**

- Taught 974 Eating Smart Being Active, NEAT, and Teen Cuisine lessons to 191 people, positively affecting 487 family members. 92% of adults improved nutrition practices and physical activity with positive changes; 81% showed improvement in food resource management practices.

**Youth:**

- Taught in 25 classrooms, one library and three groups at the Wade Center in Bluefield, West Virginia. Reached 584 youths from third through fifth grade with nutritional lessons that included a lesson, physical activity and a taste testing.

**Public Health:**

- Rethink Your Drink/Kids Farmer’s Market
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- Younger camp — 186 children & adults participated
- Older camp — 120 children & adults participated
- CARDIAC Program:
  - 17 Schools — All Kindergarten, 2nd and 5th Grade classes participated — 1,997 students