

## County Extension Staff

Karen Byers  
County Extension Director  
Kasey Peters  
County Program Assistant  
Sandi Bueltel  
Office Administrator  
Barb Utech  
Office Assistant  
Jan Burk  
Family Finance Specialist  
Wade Weber  
Youth Development Specialist

## ISU Extension in Dickinson County

1600 15<sup>th</sup> Street • Spirit Lake, IA 51360  
Phone: (712) 336-3488 • Fax: (712) 336-3498  
[www.extension.iastate.edu/dickinson](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/dickinson)

*Get inside Extension and discover how we support healthy people, environments, and economies. Read about some of the ways ISU Extension and Outreach meets local needs, improves quality of life, and helps make Dickinson County a better place to live. You'll be amazed at what we do.*

Steve Brueggeman  
Extension Council Chair

Cheryl Heronemus  
Regional Extension Education Director

## Dickinson County Extension Council

Every Iowa county has an elected Extension Council that guides local educational programming by partnering with staff. From needs assessment through program implementation and evaluation of outcomes, the council represents the issues and people of the county.



Front Row LR – JoAnn Rouse, Ernest Cupp, Susan Reiser  
Back Row LR – Steve Brueggeman, Connie Purchase, Cari Wallace,  
Curt Smith, Sue Boettcher. Unavailable for photo: VerDon Schmidt

We have identified these local issues as priority topics for current and future programming:

- Healthier Lifestyle Choices
- Growth of Youth & 4-H Programs
- Reach with Underserved Audiences
- Family Financial Security

## Healthy People

Dickinson County Extension provided early literacy programming with 14 local families thanks to in-kind support from the Lake Park Public Library and Harris-Lake Park Community Schools. The goal of the Family Storyteller Program was to increase childhood literacy by increasing the amount and quality of time families spend reading together.

Participants in the program met for a series of six, two-hour sessions. Each evening they enjoyed a family-style meal provided by numerous community supporters; free childcare provided by the Silver Lakers 4-H Club; and educational programming by ISU Extension.

Parent evaluation comments stated that they learned...

- *“to read better, ask more questions, and get kids more involved in reading.”*
- *“the importance of authors and illustrators.”*
- *“a lot of techniques to make stories more interesting and interactive.”*



Parents also stated that their children learned...

- *“how to predict and relate the book to life.”*
- *“how to pay attention to detail.”*
- *“how to relate better with others.”*
- *“a greater love for books.”*

Family Storyteller participants shared that the best thing about the literacy program was the additional take home activities and books provided by Dickinson County Extension. An unexpected outcome of the program was that six of the families became new members and frequent users of the Lake Park Public Library.

We look forward to providing the program countywide next year with support from DCEF grant funding.

## Healthy Environments

Dickinson County Extension served as the host site for a 40-hour Certified Master Gardener Training Program in partnership with Clay and Emmet County Extension Services.

Certified Master Gardeners are members of the local community who take an active interest in growing flowers, vegetables, fruits, shrubs, trees, and lawns. What sets them apart from other gardeners is their commitment to learning and sharing what they learn with others.

A total of 17 participants from the three-county region met for 40-hours of program instruction. Participants learned research-based information about lawn care, ornamental trees & shrubs, insects, plant diseases, soils, plant nutrition, vegetables, fruits, houseplants, garden design, annuals and perennials.

To complete their certification requirements, participants shared another 40 hours of volunteer service in their communities. They used their knowledge, talents, and skills to answer horticultural questions, assist with lawn and garden shows, and develop educational displays.

## Healthy Economies

"Farmland Leasing and Land Values" were hot topics for Dickinson County residents this year as evidenced by the overwhelming attendance at a July 19<sup>th</sup> meeting held in the Spirit Lake Community Building.



"Increases in land values and cash rents created heightened interest in farm leasing arrangements", noted Melissa O'Rourke, ISU Extension Farm & Agribusiness Management Specialist.

The two-and-a-half hour meeting provided ISU Extension research findings on farmland ownership and leasing trends such as:

- Iowa farmland values increased by at least 15% during 2010.
- NW Iowa 2011 cash rental rates increased nearly 20% over 2010 -- and 50% over the past five years.
- More than ½ of Iowa farmland is rented.
- The average age of farmland owners continues to rise.
- 55% of Iowa's farmland is owned by people over the age of 65 – 28% is owned by people over the age of 75.
- Children and surviving spouses of farmers are less likely to continue operating the farm themselves.

"The farmland leasing and land values meeting definitely met a need for residents in the county. The goal for participants is that they take this research-based information and make sound decisions with their farming practices," states County Extension Director, Karen Byers.

## Internship Impacts

Summer internships sparked a variety of new partnerships, new programs and new ideas.

Jesse Baldwin, junior art education major at Northwestern College, provided summer assistance for youth programs in the county. His expertise in the arts lead to five summer camps for youth to learn about art principles and design elements through hands-on activities

including: drawing, painting, working with clay, making paper, and creating fun duct tape projects. As a result of these camps, we experienced an increased number of exhibits and youth participation at the county fair.

Jesse also created awareness and attracted more people to Extension activities through a first ever 5K Fun Run and a main street graffiti wall project in the community.



Intern, Ciara Witte, spent 300 hours with us this summer creating new 4-H recruitment pieces, Master Gardener promotional and display items, as well as Families Program press releases, video clips and more.

Both internship experiences enhanced programming for the county and provided value-added work experiences for these students.

... and justice for all  
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call 800-795-3272 (voice) or 202-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating.

**December 2011**

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
Extension and Outreach