

Region 17 Stakeholder Report 2010 - Content

Healthy Economies

Annie's Project Studies Aronia Berries

Providing information on risk management is nothing new for Extension clientele, except when the class enrollment consists of 15 women from three states who know the very minimum about commercial horticulture. Starting with that premise, the Annie's Project was selected as the program to be adapted to include aronia berry growers. Annie's is an educational program dedicated to strengthening women's roles in the modern farm enterprise. They focused on several factors including: production, pricing and marketing, legal and personal risks. As a result of the series of meetings, the majority of the women have had more in-depth conversations with spouses and professionals to determine if growing non-traditional crops such as aronia berries is a wise business decision.

Healthy People

Youth Solve Problems Through LEGO Leagues

The LEGO Mindstorm NXT Robots are drawing youth from thirteen 4-H clubs in Region 17 that are interested in building, problem solving, and designing robots. These 4-H clubs provide youth ages 9 to 14 with the opportunity to learn to build and program robots around specific objectives and goals.

The special competition gets youth thinking about how they might study climate and make changes to positively impact the climate— on their planet and also in our their communities.

What youth get from this 4-H club experience is far more than just the fun of working with the robots. They learn valuable teamwork skills as they work together to bring all their ideas into successful robot designs and research on how the theme affects their community. They learn important communication and citizenship skills as they prepare a presentation on their research and present it to their community leaders. As one leader remarked, "First LEGO League can change a kid's life. They begin as your typical 9 to 14-year-old kids. But something happens as their club tackles the challenge. They are asked to think in new ways. They solve problems. They work with leaders and mentors. They fail; they succeed. They begin to ask questions they have never asked before. They teach themselves."





Healthy People

Home Visits Help Families

Most families would rather learn in the comfort of their own home. *Growing Strong Families* offers families just that in Fremont and Page counties.

The parent educator with *Growing Strong Families* visits individual homes once a month bringing information about child development, parent education, nutrition and financial management resources. The program is funded by Corner Counties Early Childhood Area.

Home visitors build trusting relationships with parents. *Growing Strong Families* helps them get the services and supports they need, encouraging them to become more involved in their children's development and to achieve their own personal goals. Parents know more about child rearing; use more positive discipline; are more confident about parenting; have better communication skills, have less parenting stress, and are more involved with and securely attached to their children.

Families who receive home visits are more likely to have health insurance and a medical home, to seek prenatal and well-child care, and to get their children immunized. Families rely less on public assistance, have a healthier interval between pregnancies, fewer problems with substance use, and less criminal justice involvement.

Home visiting is an effective, research-based and cost-efficient way to bring families and resources together to ensure that children grow up healthy and ready to learn.



Healthy Environments

Montgomery County Extension has promoted a healthy environment through Water Quality day camps to middle school students in Villisca, Stanton, and Red Oak. Topics included the stream table, ground water flow model, “who’s polluting” role-playing scenario, soil and water conservation, aquatic life in ponds and lakes, water birds and wildlife, and a watershed walk.



Future Plans

Extension council members across the region have been challenged to be more engaged with program oversight and operations of county Extension offices. Region 17 will collaborate with the locally elected members, program specialists and county staff to increase programming through regional and county delivery mechanisms to meet the needs of local residents. ISU Extension will also increase networking and collaboration across the region supporting economic development. As a non-biased source of information we can truly say, “It Starts with Extension.”

Key Issues

- Protecting the environment
- Expand 4-H Youth Development
- Nutrition and Health
- Horticulture
- Farm Management