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Healthy people, environments, and economies start with Extension. Read about some of the ways ISU Extension meets local needs, improves quality of life, and helps make Iowa a better place to live.
You'll be amazed at what we do.

2010 Stakeholder Report



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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.

KEY ISSUES:

We identified these priorities for current and future programming in this region . . .

- 4-H youth and volunteer participation
- Youth development, young family support, resource management, finances
- Farm management, integrated pest management, soil and water conservation
- Assistance to business and industry, Program Builder, community development
- Safe food, nutritious foods, local foods
- Marketing Extension programs to show public value



HEALTHY ECONOMIES

Iowa farmers faced complex legal issues if they had cashed checks from VeraSun within 90 days of the company's bankruptcy filing in 2008. They were asked in late August 2010 to return 80 percent of the payments they'd received. Farmers had to respond to the company's law firms by Sept. 30, so they turned to ISU Extension for advice. ISU Extension worked with attorneys at ISU's Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation to set up a meeting in Charles City to give farmers straightforward advice about the steps to take. More than 125 producers participated, and the session was videotaped and posted online for those who could not attend. Not long after the meeting, VeraSun attorneys informed the farmers that they no longer would pursue repayment.

HEALTHY PEOPLE

Youth in north central Iowa will become tomorrow's leaders because of skills they've acquired through ISU Extension 4-H Youth Development programs. 4-H Ambassador training in Mason City introduced 13 youth to local newspaper and television reporters, who instructed the 4-H'ers on how to provide a good media interview. The Ambassadors learned how to develop and share a compelling 4-H story. They have practiced that skill by providing numerous newspaper, radio, and television interviews during the year, increasing their communication skills. Youth also develop life skills through participation in 4-H club, after school,



..and justice for all
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and special interest programs. Cargill Kitchen Solutions in Mason City partnered with ISU Extension this year to educate youth about science, engineering, and technology. An AmeriCorps member worked with ISU Extension staff and volunteers to create a new LEGO Mindstorms 4-H club. Youth had 12 weeks to design, build, and program a robot for competition. They also had to prepare an in-depth research presentation related to the challenge's biomedical engineering theme.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

Buying locally grown food supports producers and farm families, adding an estimated \$71 million to the state's economy in 2009, according to the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. In north central Iowa, ISU Extension is working with organizers of farmers' markets to create a directory of local food growers. The directory will be distributed to approximately 400 schools, restaurants, and food service organizations. ISU Extension surveyed market customers to identify opportunities for vendors to improve production and marketing practices. More vendors now offer fresh produce, including corn, melons, and tomatoes, and baked goods, and engage customers to share the benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption. ISU Extension's small farms specialist provided education on farm planning and decision making, helping many local enterprises become more viable, ecological, and sustainable.

FUTURE PLANS

ISU Extension intends to expand and improve programming throughout the north central Iowa region. One focus will be agritourism. A Greenhouse Guide will be developed in cooperation with three counties, the Mennonite community, and other partners. This guide will highlight the wealth of greenhouses in the region, which will translate into dollars as people discover this hidden treasure. Financial management for families will be addressed through online courses. 4-H enrollment is positioned to increase through an intensive effort to develop the Clover Kids, shooting sports, and engineering, science, and technology programs. Ag tours, demonstrations, and cooperation with the Northeast Iowa Agricultural Experimental Association, Ag Ventures Alliance, and other agribusinesses will result in more educational programming. The Master Gardener program will be expanded and improved through various horticulture programs, tours, and events using volunteers to promote sound horticulture practices. Publicity for all programs will be enhanced through additional time and print exposure as media relationships improve and grow.

ServSafe®, a food safety course for restaurant workers, will be offered in 2011 in cooperation with the Cerro Gordo County Health Department. A leadership development program is being crafted through ISU Extension's Community and Economic Development Program and will be offered next year. Forage testing for producers will continue to provide forage analysis to determine the feed value of crops. Crop Clinics in Charles City, Clear Lake, and Northwood will provide producers with current information to prepare for the upcoming growing season.