Meeting Local Needs – 2015

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ISU Extension and Outreach provides educational opportunities for economic development, food and the environment, health and well-being, and K-12 youth outreach. We meet local needs, so Crawford County can be an even better place for the next generation.

Diane Arkfeld
Extension Council Chair

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Economic Development
Extension and Outreach in Crawford County serves as a local link for economic development activities.

The Iowa Retail Initiative was active in Denison as part of the senior-level Retail Scapes studio class from Iowa State University this past year. Students developed design concepts to enhance local retail experiences and worked with Extension professionals and community leaders to form a plan for changes in Denison.

The announcement of an immediate and permanent end to beef processing at the Tyson Fresh Meats plant in Denison, impacting 404 workers, called for immediate action. ISU Extension & Outreach Crawford County and ISUEO Human Sciences staff participated in a Workforce Development community event providing 160 family life, nutrition, and finance resource packets to those impacted by the plant closure. Ongoing interaction by ISU Extension & Outreach staff with civic and business leaders helps identify additional support opportunities for those impacted by the plant closure.

Health and Well-Being
ISU Extension & Outreach Crawford County is a great source of information for all areas of health and well-being, and is pleased to provide education and resources to Crawford County.

Safety of the food we eat is an important part of our overall health and well-being. ISU Extension & Outreach Crawford County offers ServSafe®, an educational certification program for food service managers developed by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation.

Crawford 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.

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

- Economic Development
- Health and Well-Being
- Food and the Environment
- K-12 Youth Outreach
Health and well-being starts at birth and is a life-long pursuit. This year, ISU Extension & Outreach Crawford County offered a series of programs to 23 child-care providers who work with our youngest generation. MyPlate provides 4 recommendations caretakers can implement in childcare settings while learning practical strategies and skills. Gardening with Children promotes healthy lifestyles, and environmental stewardship among preschool children. Just a Bite helps caretakers learn strategies and practical skills to provide an allergen-safe and healthy environment for the children in their care.

Local health fairs and other community events are another avenue for staff members to share research-based information. Our resources focus on easy steps to take to implement healthy habits in lifestyles.

Financial well-being contributes greatly to the overall health and well-being of individuals. A new partnership with the Plains Area Mental Health Center is piloting “Your Money, Your Future” consisting of several one hour sessions covering basic financial management, credit, banking, and a review of consumer resources.

Food and Environment
ISU Extension & Outreach Crawford County serves as a link to providing unbiased, research-based information and education to agricultural professionals to grow the economic base of Iowa agriculture.

We continue to serve as the local host for Private and Commercial Pesticide Applicators Trainings (PPAT/CPAT) to support the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS). Through these classes, participants are given the most up-to-date research regarding the use of pesticides and herbicides, as well as best practices for protecting the environment while still protecting their yields.

Education about farm management is an important role that we serve. ISU Extension & Outreach Crawford County hosted a meeting on Farm Bill Options. 320 participants learned about new programs and choices to be made in their operations. Also, a workshop about Farmland Valuation and Leasing was presented to bring unbiased information to both landowners and renters to help both parties make successful management decisions while covering current land values, rental rates, and trends and projections of how values and rents might change in the coming years.

Informing the future generation of farmers is another key role of ISU Extension & Outreach Crawford County. New and Beginning Farmer night focuses on state and USDA programs designed to help new and existing farmers find the capital resources to start or expand their operation. 35 individuals attended this workshop to better create successful agricultural enterprises.

Youth of Crawford County have the opportunity to learn more about their role and responsibility to produce safe, consumable products. 4-H members participating in meat or dairy animal projects completed Food Safety and Quality Assurance (FSQA) training.

Many of our youth do not know or understand the importance of agriculture in their lives. ISU Extension & Outreach of Crawford County partnered with Crawford County Farm Bureau to host Ag Days for the seventh-graders of Crawford County. 306 seventh-graders learned about the impact of agriculture in their daily lives through 8 educational stations highlighting various industries of agriculture. At the end of the day, youth had greater knowledge and appreciation for agriculture in Crawford County and the state of Iowa.

K-12 Youth Outreach
ISU Extension & Outreach Crawford County strives to empower youth to reach their full potential through the 4-H Youth Development program as well as outreach partnerships.

Parent involvement and academic support is critical for youth to succeed in school. Juntos para una Mejor Educación (Together for a Better Education) program helps Latino parents learn how they can help their children be successful in school, as well as helps parents and youth realize the long-term benefits of graduating from high school and participating in higher education. 5 families with a total of 16 individuals graduated at the conclusion of the six-week program.

A robotics camp was held to encourage Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) skills in youth aged 10-18.

4-H continues to endure as the biggest program for youth in Crawford County through ISU Extension & Outreach, as there were over 360 enrolled in the 4-H Youth Development Program, 103 of which enrolled in Clover Kids.

4-H is a national organization that empowers youth in grades 4-12 to reach their full potential by working and learning in partnership with caring adults.