



BUILDING A #STRONGIOWA

2019 IN CERRO GORDO COUNTY

2019 Crop Advantage Series Held in Mason City

Each January, Crop Advantage Series brings a variety of timely topics to north Iowa ranging from private pesticide applicator continuing instruction to world markets. This year's topics had a common theme: helping farmers make every decision count.

crop disease management, tariffs – past, present, and future – and a global market outlook. Topics were customized to address regional concerns, adding a higher level of relevance to the program.

The 2019 series hosted more than 140 farmers and other agriculture professionals, providing sessions on soil pH,

The 2018 growing season had significant challenges in the fields, markets, and pocket book. Crop Advantage



Series helps meet these challenges to keep our ag industry strong.



DeBour Brings Experience to Cerro Gordo County as New Director

Since starting Oct. 1 as county director, Sarah DeBour has focused on increasing programming for youth and adults in Cerro Gordo County. She is a 2009 graduate of Iowa State University with a bachelor's degree in agriculture and life sciences education. She

received her master's degree in 2012 from Grand Canyon University in education administration in organizational leadership. DeBour is committed to enhancing partnerships, growing our volunteer base, and creating a #StrongIowa in Cerro Gordo County.

Cerro Gordo County Extension Council Members

Cerro Gordo County Extension Council members are elected by citizens to develop local educational programming, from needs assessment through program implementation and evaluation of outcomes, that meets the needs of Cerro Gordo County residents. Cerro Gordo County partners with local communities and organizations, campus specialists, and campus researchers to build a strong Iowa. The Cerro Gordo County Extension Council develops programming in the areas of economic development, food and the environment, health and well-being, and K-12 youth outreach.

Dean Weber
Council Chair

Sterling Young
Council Vice Chair

William Cody
Council Treasurer

Donovan Olson
Regional Director

Linda Schluter
Council Secretary

Brenda Harris
Council Member

Kris Kramer
Council Member

Arlene Noss
Council Member

Eric Arthur
Council Member

Dalton Collinan
Council Member

Cerro Gordo 4-H Youth Learn About Science, Art, and Engineering

The Charles H. MacNider Art Museum and Cerro Gordo County 4-H applied for the Team Quest grant to host a free science and arts class for youth ages 6 and up.

Thanks to the grant, we were able to teach 30 youth about Alexander Calder, an artist who is best known for his innovative mobiles and creating kinetic moving structures.

The youth were able to use their creativity and curiosity to create four different sculptures and experiment with spinners. They learned how to make them spin faster and longer and how to use



watercolors and movement in their creations. We also created a popsicle stick “bomb” to teach the youth how kinetic energy is stored until it is released. All 30 kids had a wonderful time, learned a lot, and were able to take their projects home to be displayed.

Pictured above are three participants with their moving sculptures, and all of the participants with the popsicle stick “bomb.”

Cerro Gordo County 4-H Shifting Gears Club Holds Bread Making Workshop



The Shifting Gears 4-H club held a bread making workshop on March 31. There were 11 members present.

They made bread from scratch, kneaded the dough, and let it rise. Each member chose to make either cinnamon rolls, caramel rolls, or a homemade butter braid.

Jack Watters said, “I found out lots of flour needs to be used to knead the dough or else there will be a sticky mess.” Taleigha Fessler said, “I learned salt is used because it gives the dough flavor and also inhibits the yeast.” Everyone had lots of fun and learned new things about what goes into the dough and why.

Cerro Gordo County Creates an Action Plan for the Future

In April, the Cerro Gordo County Extension Council met to develop an action plan for the future. Eric Christiansen, community and economic development specialist, facilitated a process that included a survey of council members and staff, a goal-setting session, and

culminated in a final report to the council and staff.

The group discussed and addressed issues, created an action plan, and created work teams to accomplish plan goals. The council will use the action plan to guide staff and achieve the goals over the next two years.



Cerro Gordo Women, Land, and Legacy “Farming in a Changing Climate”



On Oct. 17, at the Cerro Gordo County 4-H Learning Center, the fall meeting of Cerro Gordo County Women, Land, and Legacy met with special guest Don Hofstrand.

He introduced the 35 women in attendance to “Farming In a Changing Climate.” The talk focused on the science behind climate change. Hofstrand stressed that the scientific

community took a fact-based look at global warming, also known as global weirding. Global warming has two parts, weather and climate. Weather is what it looks like today, and climate is long-range for 30+ years of data.

The take away from the talk was about strategies women could use as land owners to combat the rising temperatures in their own operations.

Cerro Gordo County Celebrates Extension and Outreach Week

Cerro Gordo County celebrated ISU Extension and Outreach Week by spreading awareness on social and other media about what Extension offers to the community.

Participants entered a drawing to win a basket of goodies promoting ISU Extension and Outreach offerings. They were asked to share their interest areas and an

email address for the monthly newsletter.

Held each year, ISU Extension and Outreach week was April 8-13. The dates for ISU Extension and Outreach Week in 2020 are April 13-18. Cerro Gordo County Extension will host a business open house April 16, from 4:30 to 6:30 pm.



Cerro Gordo Youth Receive State 4-H and Equine Awards



In March 2019, two Cerro Gordo County 4-H members were recognized for their accomplishments during the State 4-H Recognition Day on the Iowa State University campus.

This statewide event, held each spring, is the culmination of the year’s recognition process. The Iowa 4-H state recognition process invites youth from across the state

to pursue state and national leadership opportunities.

The state Equine Extravaganza competition was held in March at Ellsworth Community College. It provided opportunities for all youth in grades 4 through 12 to share their knowledge of the equine industry through a variety of competitions and participatory events.

Cerro Gordo County 4-H had two horse judging teams that participated in this year’s event. One team earned 1st Place Senior Overall and is eligible to compete in the National 4-H Contest. A second team earned

3rd Place Senior Team Overall.

Both teams are coached by 4-H Alumni Spencer Orr. We are so proud of the hard work our 4-H members and volunteers put into this! The amount that they learned throughout this experience is second to none.



Cerro Gordo 4-H Members Go Back to Nature at Clover Woods

Fifty 4-H members from Cerro Gordo County joined 4-H'ers from Worth, Franklin, Floyd, and Mitchell counties to spend two nights and three days at Clover Woods Camp in Madrid. Members made pie iron pizzas over the fire, T-shirts, went on a creek walk, rock climbed, and learned about native bees. They also got to swim and play everyone's favorite game, GaGa Ball!

Each cabin created its own awesome skits, which included rodeos, queen pageants, and 4-H



Judging Day. Kids concluded the evening with s'mores and games! The last day of camp was spent signing T-shirts, taking pictures,

packing up the charter bus, and hitting the road for home. The event was a great success and a great experience for all involved!

Cerro Gordo County Holds Successful 'Blast Off' Camp



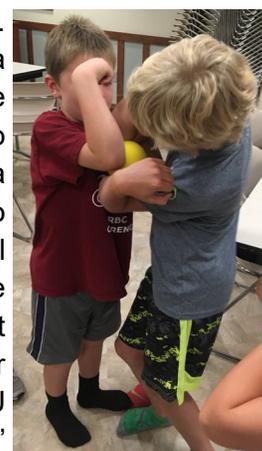
On July 11, Cerro Gordo County 4-H and the Clear Lake Public Library partnered to offer a 'Blast Off' day camp. Twenty-one kids in kindergarten through third grade attended. At the day

camp, the kids learned about Peggy Whitson, an astronaut born in Iowa, and Clayton Anderson, an astronaut who attended Iowa State University.

Youth read the book *A is for Astronaut: Blasting Through the Alphabet*, written by astronaut Clayton Anderson. As they read the story, we stopped at different letters to do activities related to the book. For "B is for Blast Off," the kids made straw rockets and launched them around the room. For "L is for Landing," we made parachutes. For "P is for Planning," kids discussed how astronauts need to have a plan

when in space.

They played a game where they had to come up with a plan on how to pass a ball around the circle without using their hands. For "U is for Universe," we learned about the different planets in our solar system. The youth ended the fun and educational camp participating in a fun rocket-making activity.



Region 3 Hosts All-Staff Retreat at Lime Creek Nature Center

On April 12, Region 3 held an all-staff retreat at the Lime Creek Nature Center in Mason City. The day began with a team-building activity, followed by get-to-know your field specialists and a fun activity for networking. After lunch, staff participated in a scavenger hunt, viewed a virtual vlog of campus resources put together by Darla Olson, Michelle Sackville, and the Osage High School technology class. The day ended with a fun team-building activity led by Gail Castillo before wrapping up. Staff got to know each other, enjoyed fun activities, and learned about resources available.



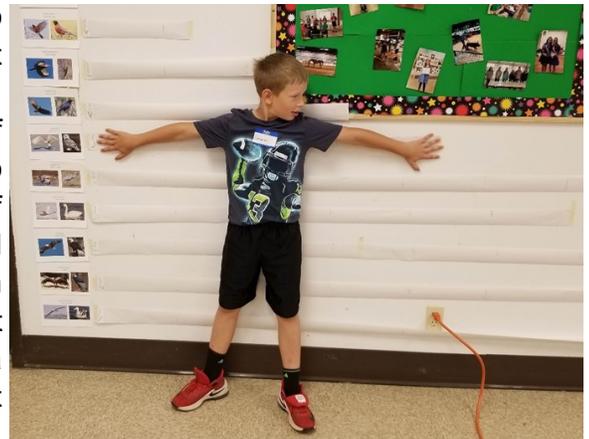
Cerro Gordo County Holds Wing it Day Camp

On July 9, kids from kindergarten through third grade enjoyed the day learning about birds. The group started the day by learning about feathers, discussing the difference between down, contour, and plumage feathers. Then they did an experiment to learn how birds stay warm and cool. They also learned about what different birds eat by what shape their beak is.

Students tried eating like birds by finding worms (licorice) in a pudding cup using their beaks (chopsticks). Students then

went outside and pretended to run like an ostrich and collect seeds. For the next activity, the kids divided into groups of two and used a ruler to measure the wing span of different birds. They learned that the smallest wing span was a hummingbird at 4 inches and the largest was a wandering albatross at 11 feet and 11 inches.

In the afternoon, students cut out a bird shape and decorated it with markers and feathers. They moved and danced like a variety of birds to learn how they communicate with each other.



They then did experiments with eggs. Students squeezed eggs in their palms to discover how the thin shells react to different types of pressure. Students were then able to crack open the eggs to discover what was inside.

Cerro Gordo County Sponsors Master Gardener Bus Trip

On Oct. 18, Cerro Gordo County held the annual Master Gardener's bus trip. Forty-nine participants enjoyed several central Iowa stops. The first stop was Reiman Gardens in Ames. Highlights for the participants included the butterfly rooms and the conservatory. Pictured (far right) are participants enjoying the butterflies at Reiman Gardens.

After lunch at Hickory Park, the group made its way to Center Grove Orchard in Cambridge. It was a perfect fall day and all enjoyed a hayrack ride and seeing the produce and activities at the orchard. At the end of the tour, participants enjoyed a slice of homemade pie. The final leg of the journey was Prairie Moon Winery, a family-owned business in the



northwest corner of Ames. A highlight for many was the educational tour led by Matt Nissen. He shared his knowledge of grape production and viticulture.



Participants appreciated the bus trip because they learned about unique operations in the area. Be on the lookout for another trip in spring of 2020, as well as more information on Master Gardener training in Cerro Gordo County.

Cerro Gordo County Clover Kids Learn About Dirt-N-Worms

In September, Clover Kids in kindergarten through third grade learned about earthworms. They read the story *Diary of a Worm* by Doreen Cronin. The character, Worm, told about his life through informational and funny diary entries. Then kids observed real earthworms! They were asked to observe their worm's movements, touch them and feel the segments on their body.

They used a magnifying glass to look closer at them and measured the worms to see how long they were.

Kids had fun painting with fake worms using cooked spaghetti noodles. The session ended with a wiggly worm game where kids picked a popsicle stick with a picture on it and then did the movement they had selected. Some of the movements included wiggle like a worm, show us your silly face, and freeze like an ice cube.



Cerro Gordo County Preps to Offer VITA Assistance to Area Residents

Complex and changing tax laws baffle most consumers, and tax return preparation can be too costly to low and moderate income taxpayers. In addition, proper filing of a tax return is an important part of claiming public benefits. That is why Cerro Gordo County Extension participates in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free assistance in preparing their

own tax returns to people who generally make \$56,000 or less, persons with disabilities, and limited English speaking taxpayers. Assistance includes basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing. Brenda Schmitt, Human Sciences specialist, has coordinated the program for the last 17 years.

Last year, 12 VITA volunteer tax preparers prepared 503 tax returns for low- and moderate-income households at six sites in

Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Mitchell, Chickasaw, Palo Alto, and Emmet counties.

Tax refunds claimed through Extension-supported VITA sites total over \$571,568. In addition, VITA program low and moderate income taxpayers avoid approximately \$75,450 in tax preparation fees. This additional income provides an extremely valuable boost to families who often have little in the way of savings or emergency reserves.

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