Iowa State University Extension and Outreach connects the needs of Iowans with Iowa State University research and resources. We are working with the people of Cherokee County to help build a strong Iowa.

Cherokee 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:

- Health and Well-Being
- Community and Economic Development
- Food and the Environment
- Youth Development

Health and Well-Being

Babysitting Club Equips Young Caretakers

First-time babysitters in and around Cherokee County were presented with a unique opportunity to learn from others and receive hands-on experience by becoming a member of babysitting club, a specific interest-driven 4-H club offered by Cherokee County Youth Coordinator Debbie Erpelding.

The club of 5th grade and older members, meets certain days after school teaching youth about general babysitting responsibilities and knowledge. Club members learn about the ages and stages of youth from infant to teenager, practice hands-on games and activities, gain familiarity with first-aid and emergency preparedness, take part in making easy, healthy snacks and better understand the business of babysitting and leading others.

Community and Economic Development

Summer Savory at the Grainery Builds Understanding of Agriculture

Summer Savory at the Grainery was a community effort to increase local food awareness and adult agricultural education. The event featured a local foods dinner, learning sessions from the MMCRU FFA Chapter, Ag in the Classroom, Farm Bureau, the Natural Resources Conservation District and Iowa Beef Center, and concluded with keynote speaker Darcy Maulsby who shared interesting and humorous commentary on Iowa's food culture.

Local businesses sponsored tables and sent employees or clients who they felt would enjoy and learn from the evening. A total of 160 diners attended, as well as the Cherokee County Cattlemen and Pork Producers who grilled the meat courses, and Cherokee County 4-H and FFA members who helped serve the meal.

Extension Council Members

We want communities and farmers to thrive, and families and children to be healthy. And eventually we want to turn the world over to the next generation better than we found it.

David Whited
Extension Council Chair

Terry Janssen
Regional Director

Donna Amundson
Council Member

Chuck Clark
Council Member

Sara Husman
Council Member

Cindra Goodburn
Council Member

Jessica Kannegieter
Council Member

Susan Perrin
Council Member

Gina Rassel
Council Member

LaRae Wendt
Council Member
Youth Development

Summer Programs Grow in Cherokee County

2018 began the second year of regional summer camps being offered in Cherokee County. Youth from the area had the opportunity to participate in Robotics, Family and Consumer Science, and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) summer camps, as well as a few county specific camps.

This year, 239 youth participated in the camps which were hosted all across the county.

One summer camp opportunity which was new this year and formed through an interesting partnership was the “Growing in the Garden” camp. Local first through third graders were partnered with Cherokee County Master Gardeners. They were given a small garden plot at the Cherokee County Fairgrounds, and the youth and Master Gardeners worked together throughout the summer to plant, tend and harvest the produce. Much of the produce was then donated to the local food bank to help fight hunger in the area.

Another program of note was the “Lights… Camera… Cooking!” camp which enabled youth participants to essentially take part in a Food Network television show. Youth learned about cooking and baking by making their own meals and snacks while at camp, and were later teamed up to film their own cooking or baking television show. During the camp, participants learned about nutrition and wellness, how to properly follow a recipe, and gained videography skills.

Food and the Environment

Marketing and Leasing Key Topics in Ag Programming

In the fall of 2018, Cherokee County hosted Women Marketing Grain, a new program that had not been offered in the area before. Eleven farm and agribusiness women from Cherokee County and surrounding areas participated in the course which focused on managing price risk using tools like forward contracting, futures and options, alternative marketing and crop insurance. According to participants, the four-session class helped them to better understand grain marketing which will in turn lead to long-term marketing success for their farm or agricultural venture, as well as increased communication between them and their spouse or farming partner(s).

One annual program that is always needed in Cherokee County is the Farmland Leasing and Value course offered by Farm and Agribusiness Management Specialist Gary Wright. This year, 21 landlords and tenants attended the workshop which focused on farmland ownership and tenure in Iowa, cover crop research and methods to implement in lease agreements, current cash rental rate and land value survey results, methods for determining fair rent for 2019, legal aspects of farmland leases including strategies for writing and terminating a farm lease, and additional ISU Extension and Outreach resources.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

Cherokee County

209 Centennial Drive, Suite A · Cherokee, Iowa 51012
www.extension.iastate.edu/cherokee
712-225-6196

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