

WHAT WE WANT #STRONGIOWA

2019 IN MONONA COUNTY

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 Monona County for what we all want: a strong Iowa.

Monona 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
- Food and the Environment
- Health and Well-being
- K12 Youth Outreach

Health and Well-Being

Food 4 You Giveaways—ISU Extension and Outreach Program Assistant, Megan Wimmer shares her food and nutrition expertise at Onawa's monthly Food 4 You Giveaway. She provides nutrition education and low-cost recipes for nearly 100 people. Many are challenged to



find nutritious, inexpensive ways to cook the food they receive. Megan connects residents to the information and tools they need for healthy, delicious and economical meals.

Plan Ahead—ISU Extension and Outreach Program Assistant, Megan Wimmer, along with Jan Monahan, Family Finance Specialist held a Plan Ahead program at Center Heights in Onawa. This is part of the Stay Independent Series. Plan Ahead was held on June 19 and 26, 2019.

Over 30 participants learned ways to plan ahead in case something major happens in their life. Family Finance Specialist Jan Monahan discussed how to make an emergency kit in case of a tornado or other disasters. Many attendees expressed interest in preparing the kits for their own homes and were pleased this type of financial and emergency preparedness training was offered in Monona County.



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.

Molly Hewitt
Regional Director

Leland Hathaway
Extension Council Chair

Darla Lloyd
Council Member

Brian Hobbs
Council Member

Peg Ingram
Council Member

Laura Neldeberg
Council Member

Bruce Parker
Council Member

Bridget Wiebers
Council Member

Randy Stanislav
Council Member

Whitney Carrier
Council Member



Food and Environment

Master Conservationist Program

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach in Plymouth, Woodbury and Monona counties offered the Iowa Master Conservationist Program in the fall of 2019 for the first time in over 10 years. The program providing participants with hands-on interaction and learning about the diversity of our region's natural resources. Participants learned about Iowa's natural ecosystems and the diversity of conservation challenges and opportunities that exist in the region. Graduates of the course learn to make informed choices for leading and educating others to improve conservation in Iowa. The program consisted of approximately 12 hours of online curriculum and five face-to-face meetings. Online modules included lessons and resources by Iowa State subject-matter experts that were reviewed at the participants' own pace at home. Module topics included conservation history and science, understanding Iowa ecosystems, implementing conservation practices in human dominated landscapes and developing skills to help educate others about conservation practices. The Master Conservationist program is a partnership between the ISU Extension offices and the county conservation boards in Plymouth, Woodbury, and Monona Counties.



Morel and Mushrooms Workshop

On April 11th, 2019 Horticulture Educator, Katelyn Brinkerhoff, coordinated a virtual "Morels, False Morels, and Other Wild Mushroom" program with Lina Rodriguez-Salamanca, ISU Fungi Specialist. The program was held at the Monona County Conservation Board Nature Center with 17 participants. Lina discussed how to identify various mushrooms native to Iowa. She also shared additional resources available and answered many questions from the group all over a Zoom meeting.



Continuing to Grow Gardening Programs—ISU Extension and Outreach in Monona County continues to manage and provide several educational opportunities related to gardening, pollinators, fresh produce and more. Volunteers and partners help tremendously in these efforts.

West Monona Summer Garden Program— A weekly garden program for youth Pre-K through adults took place every Wednesday morning at the West Monona school garden. Approximately 20 youth and 5 adults were reached weekly. The program offered over 12 hours of hands-on education. Curriculum from Growing in the Garden, Junior Master Gardener and the Power of Produce were utilized. Youth harvested fresh produce from the garden and were provided with new healthy recipes to share with their families.

Onawa Community Garden Beds—County Extension received a RAGBRAI community grant to build more raised beds and install permanent water. Industrial Tech students from West Monona volunteered class time to assemble the raised garden beds. The City of Onawa partnered to support the water connection.

The Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Donation and Home Demonstration Garden—Volunteers and staff harvested 533 pounds of produce in 2019. As part of the Growing Together initiative 1,591 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables were donated to food pantries and residents in need in 2 years. Approximately 500 people experiencing low income in Monona County were served this season.



County Extension Staff

Programming efforts at ISU Extension and Outreach in Monona County continue to expand. We strive to have the resources available to serve all county residents across a wide spectrum of program areas. In 2019 we hired a part-time summer assistant, Gary Zima. Gary worked in the Demonstration and Donation garden, at the West Monona school garden, 4-H youth camps and workshops as well as the Monona County Fair.

Monona County is the first county in the state to pilot a shared Ag Specialist position with the ISU Western Research Farm. Craig Riesberg was hired in November of 2019. He will serve in a dual role providing labor to the farm, assistance for research and on-farm trials and will help with local Ag outreach to residents of all ages.

Region 5 shares a full-time Horticulture Educator. Katelyn Brinkerhoff hosts Master Gardener classes and webinars, coordinates the Siouxland Garden Show, Master Conservationist series, Morel Mushroom workshop, helps with Monona County gardens and more.

Region 5 Rising Star Interns are Iowa State Students that spend the summer assisting with local foods outreach, summer camps, and county fairs.

Current office staff are: Office Assistant Keith Baker, Program Assistant Megan Wimmer, County Youth Coordinator Nancy McGrain and County Director Melissa Beermann.

We currently have 100 approved volunteers. Volunteers support 4-H and youth programs, Master Gardener projects, economic development and agricultural programs.

Thriving Partnerships

ISU Extension and Outreach in Monona County would not be able to provide the programming we do without the support of our community, educational and financial partners. Some unique partnerships for program delivery in 2019 included Onawa Tae-Kwon-Do, the Boy and Girl Scouts, Niman Ranch, Burgess Health Center, Monona County Wellness Coalition, Northwest Iowa STEM Hub, ISU Conservation Station, Monona County Conservation, Iowa DNR, USDA, county school districts and ISU Western Research Farm - to name a few. We appreciate the support of everyone in our wide network so we can offer quality programming to all residents.

K-12 Youth Outreach

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach 4-H and youth programs provides life-learning experiences. Monona County 4-H and youth programs reached over 400 youth from Kindergarten to 12th grade in 2019. A youth workshop, camp or community outreach opportunity was offered every month of the year. Nature Day at Lewis and Clark State Park provided youth the opportunity to experience outdoor activities such as archery, hiking and fishing. Makerspace Day encouraged Kindergarten-3rd graders to complete hands-on activities that included chalk jars and designing a dog house out of cardboard. They utilized STEM grant items called "make-dos" and "strawbees" to learn engineering skills. The National "Hour of Code" workshop gave youth the opportunity to work with robots and coding after school. Stem-Fest encouraged youngsters to work with ramps, watch colors explode, try marble painting, use magnetic cubelets and practice using a temperature gun. A parent-child mentor night was held where they made soaps, candles, fudge and peanut butter balls using nutritional ingredients like Northern beans. 3rd-6th graders explored Cherokee, Iowa's one-room schoolhouse, the museum, planetarium and wellness center for a fun swim. Annual babysitting classes prepare 4th-6th grade youth for the important task of babysitting.

Other outdoor activities included family fishing and family ice fishing. These are only a few of the activities enjoyed throughout the year. Working on projects during the year and taking them to the fair is an added bonus for many. Conference judging prepares youth for one-on-one interactions such as future job interviews. Exhibiting livestock is an intensive commitment that demonstrates hard work and responsibility. 4-H is for everyone with unlimited opportunities!





Ag & Natural Resources

ISU Extension and Outreach in Monona County continues to provide required continuing education classes to private and commercial applicators each year.

ISU Extension and Outreach Crop Program Specialist, Joel DeJong presents face-to-face sessions for private pesticide applicators. 107 attended 2 sessions in 2019.

Commercial recertification videos are produced annually and shown in the county office. Monona County had 90 commercial applicators recertify in 2019.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Ag Specialists continue to provide local manure management and transportation certification, Beef Quality Assurance (BQA), and a wealth of timely agricultural topics to local producers.

Economic Development

Career Ready Youth

Economic Development in Monona County begins with our youth. Hosting workshops like Preschoolers and Pennies and providing career connections as we educate youth will help to grow young minds. We work to keep those young minds in satisfying careers here in Iowa.

Wind/Solar Conference

Monona County has begun preparation and research to host a renewables conference in the upcoming months. The conference will feature Iowa State University and industry experts. Attendees will learn about costs, benefits, potential tax credits and more. Watch for details soon!



County Extension Staff



Melissa Beermann
County Director



Nancy McGrain
County Youth Coordinator



Megan Wimmer
Program Assistant



Keith Baker
Office Assistant



Molly Hewitt
Regional Director



Katelyn Brinkerhoff
Horticulture Educator

Craig Riesberg
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