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

Hamilton 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.

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.

Kathy Getting  
Council Chair

Cindy McCullough  
Council Vice Chair

Norm Wonderlich  
Council Treasurer

Mancy Buakham  
Council Secretary

Amber Cordoba  
Council Member

Gayle Odland  
Council Member

Bruce Perry  
Council Member

Lisa Tapper  
Council Member

Steve Wright  
Council Member

Health and Well-Being

ServSafe, a food safety certification training offered by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, was held in Hamilton County in October 2018. This training allowed retail food service establishments to become certified in food safety, which is currently mandated law in Iowa. Holly VanHeel, Human Sciences specialist, provided this training to 11 individuals in Hamilton County with a 100 percent pass rate for the exam. This training provided these retail establishments information to implement safe food practices such as preventing foodborne illnesses, avoiding cross-contamination, and proper food preparation and storage of food supplies.

Food and the Environment

Hamilton County took the lead in educating local residents interested in producing honey and raising bees, as well as promoting bees as pollinators. Around 30 Hamilton County residents participated in educational meetings at which a variety of beekeeping topics were taught. In addition to offering these meetings, in 2018 Hamilton County Extension and Outreach created a new open class honey exhibit section at the county fair. Locally produced honey and beeswax art exhibits were judged, and public awareness was raised by this addition to the county fair.

Staff Based in Hamilton County

Stacie Iles  
Office Manager

Leah Feltz  
County K-12 Youth Educator

Yvonne McCormick  
Horticulturist

Barb Wollan  
Human Sciences Specialist, Family Finance

Sue Schmitz  
Program Coordinator

Abby Stanek  
Youth Program Specialist

JD Waybill  
4-H Coordinator

Malisa Rader  
Human Sciences Specialist, Family Life
Ag and Natural Resources

Farm women have significant employment, management and ownership on family farms in Hamilton County. In June 2018, 12 women gathered for the Hamilton County Women in Ag Tour.

The first stop was the Boone River near Webster City. Kelvin Leibold, ISU Extension and Outreach farm management specialist, shared there were now more than 21 restored oxbows in the Boone River Watershed. He explained the slower moving water system helped reduce the sediment and nitrate load while also working to delay potential flooding. The next stop was to a small dairy farm, Lost Lake Farm. There the group learned about locally made artisanal cheese and niche farming. The last stop was Three Sisters Farm, a sheep and farming operation. Jamie Benning, ISU Extension and Outreach water quality program manager, spoke to the group about the local watershed and practices used on area farms to improve water quality. Jesse Randall, ISU Extension and Outreach forestry specialist, demonstrated chain saw safety.

Women gained new knowledge about the diversity of Hamilton County agriculture. Fun and interactive experiences provided memorable lessons and personal growth that led to new insights. Women learned how farms manage risks, profitability, human safety, regulations, market trends, and soil and water conservation. Through knowledge and empowerment, local women created more sustained agricultural businesses, conserved natural resources and supported other women in agriculture.

K-12 Youth Outreach

2018 was another year of growth and “Making the Best Better” for Hamilton County youth! The 4-H enrollment year had some amazing numbers.

- 206 4-H club members, grades 4-12
- 85 Clover Kids members, grades K-3
- 86 adult volunteers
- 175 Iowa 4-H curriculum contact hours
- 636 K-12 youth reached
- 218 youth registered for the Hamilton County Fair
  → 995 static exhibits entered
  → 2,140 livestock entries made

4-H members experienced workshops, day camps, trips and overnight camps at the county, state and national levels. Throughout the year, the eight Hamilton County 4-H clubs spent time building strong bonds through engaging activities and strengthening leadership and civic engagement skills through officer roles and community service projects.

The county office grew by one staff member and two job titles as the traditional county youth coordinator position was divided into two new roles: 4-H coordinator and K-12 outreach educator. JD Waybill was hired in September for the 4-H coordinator role and Leah Feltz moved from the CYC position into the K-12 outreach educator. These positions worked closely together to reach all youth in the county with the many benefits 4-H has to offer.

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