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:

- Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Food and the Environment
- Health and Well-being
- K12 Youth Outreach

Food and Environment

Master Gardener Program

With the support of the Extension Council, Monona County was able to offer the Master Gardener course at a discount to participants in the Fall of 2017. The value of volunteer work done by Master Gardeners is priceless. Six Master Gardeners completed the class in 2017 and will contribute a total of 240 volunteer hours in the coming year. The 2017 class met in Onawa for weekly live webinars from Iowa State University. Face-to-face sessions in partnership with Woodbury County Extension at Autumn Grove Orchard and the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center offered more in-depth and hands-on educational opportunities. The Master Gardeners are excited to offer support to local school and community gardens, a new demonstration and donation garden, and assist in several other community projects in 2018.

Nutritional Snacks

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach in Monona County is working to continue to strengthen Iowans' nutrition and well-being. Program Assistant Megan Wimmer has presented Healthy Snacks programs at the Soldier, Onawa and Mapleton libraries. The program utilized nutritious recipes from the ISU Spend Smart, Eat Smart website.

Rising Stars

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.

Leland Hathaway
Extension Council Chair

Sherry McGill
Regional Director

Brian Hobbs
Council Member

Peg Ingram
Council Member

Laura Neldeberg
Council Member

Bruce Parker
Council Member

Sandy Smith
Council Member

Randy Stanislav
Council Member

Cheryl Warner
Council Member

Sandy Bubke
Council Member
In the summer of 2017, Iowa State University students Madison Hemer, Emily Bormann, and Izzy Worrall worked to grow local foods outreach in Monona County. The Rising Stars were selected to represent Woodbury, Plymouth and Monona Counties. They provided youth programming, food demonstrations, social media, special events and worked to make connections and build relationships with local residents and organizations. The Rising Stars reached nearly 400 residents ages 6-90 in Monona County. They utilized the United States Department of Agriculture Pick a Better Snack Program and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach’s Spend Smart Eat Smart Program materials. Demonstrating how to prepare healthy snacks and offering samples at local food giveaway sites and educating youth about local, healthy foods were most successful and very appreciated.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Cow/Calf Workshop

In our efforts to help area cattle farmers, we held a workshop on Improving Margins in the Cow/Calf Enterprise. The workshop held at the Methodist Church in Mapleton was conducted by Beth Doran, Extension Beef Field Specialist, and Patrick Gunn, Extension Cow/Calf Specialist. The workshop focused on ways to control costs and make careful marketing decisions in order to maintain profits. Information included investigating factors affecting feeder calf prices, long-term strategies that improve revenue such as changes in the breeding program and how to shorten the calving season. Attendees learned ways to reduce...
feed costs and different strategies to improve revenue from both cows and calves. Some of the information shared included feeding, specifically grazing harvest residue, cover crops and alternatives feeds. Controlling feed waste, formulating balanced rations, and winter supplementation was also discussed.

**Beef Quality Assurance**

A Beef Quality Assurance workshop was held at the Western Iowa Research Farm near Castana in Monona County. The workshop provided an up-close tour of the facility and the research work being conducted at the farm. The Beef Quality Assurance workshop assisted beef producers in becoming certified or updating their Beef Quality Assurance certification. This workshop was hosted by Beth Doran, Extension Beef Field Specialist. The BQA certification program strives to provide the consumer with beef that is safe, wholesome and nutritious. The program helps ensure the domestic market for beef, which provides economic vitality to the beef industry and local communities. Management practices that focused on cattle care and handling, managing feed ingredients and medication, biosecurity, record keeping, feedlot self-assessments, beef industry trends, and the 2016 National Beef Quality Audit were all discussed.

**Health and Well-Being**

In response to the need to insure that Iowans are informed and prepared for the financial realities of aging, the 6-week program, _The Finances of Caregiving_, was offered in Monona County. The Administration on Aging states that 70% of those 65 and over will need some form of long-term services and supports while the number of families and informal caregivers to provide assistance and support is declining. After the program, participants indicated discussing caregiving issues with loved ones and took steps to prepare for caregiving for themselves and their loved one. “Everyone should take this class. Aging and caregiving impacts everyone...young and old.” said one of the participants.

**Cheri Hardison Retires after 40 Years of Service**

Cheri Hardison, Program Educator, retired on May 11 after 40 years of service to the people of Monona County. Cheri has worked for ISU Extension and Outreach since 1977 in various roles as 4-H and Youth leader of the Bobcats 4-H club for 15 years, Home Economist, County Director and currently the County Program Educator. She has lead and participated with the 4-H County Council, 4-H and Youth Committee and 4-H Fund Board. Hardison has been an educator in several program areas throughout her tenure including Families, 4-H and Youth, Communities, and Ag & Natural Resources. Cheri has been a community leader and worked to grow partnerships with several residents and community organizations. Cheri values her meaningful life-long relationships and experiences through 4-H and Extension. Her favorite part about working with Extension and Outreach has been “the people of all ages. That includes co-workers, council and committee members, volunteers and program participants.”

**Congratulations Cheri and thank you for your service to Monona County Extension.**

**Past Council Chairman Bob Haack presented Cheri with a plaque from members of the council and staff.**

**Melissa Beermann Hired as New Program Coordinator**

Melissa Beermann was hired as County Program Coordinator in April, 2017. Melissa has been with Monona County Extension since 2010. She has worked primarily with 4-H & youth, gardening, livestock and ag programs. She will continue to expand those programs as well as community and economic development, healthy living and families. Melissa is a 2002 graduate of Iowa State University with a Bachelor’s degree in Journalism and Mass Communication.

**Megan Wimmer Hired as New Program Assistant**

Mapleton native Megan Wimmer was hired in June, 2017. Megan received her Bachelor Degree in Family and Consumer Sciences/Foods and Nutrition at Wayne State University in 2016. She is a former Monona County 4-H’er with experience exhibiting communications, food and nutrition and dogs. Megan is assisting in a variety of program areas including families, nutrition and youth.

**K-12 Youth Outreach**

Providing opportunities for hands-on learning is the foundation of 4-H and youth outreach. Connecting area youth to careers in STEM—Science, Technology, Engineering and Math is a priority area for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. The Iowa Governor’s STEM Advisory Board offers grants towards purchasing curriculum and supplies annually. Monona County Extension applies and has been
awarded a grant package each year. Some of these grants include: A World In Motion, LEGO Robotics, Pint Size Science, Engineering is Elementary, STEM Maker's Space, Kid Wind and more. Staff utilize these materials in 4-H clubs, camps and education in the classroom.

Monona County Extension has provided workshops connecting STEM education directly to local careers. Youth in grades 4-12 got to experience local design and manufacturing industry at Monona County Iron in Mapleton. Safety in the welding and manufacturing industry is important so all participants used proper safety equipment like welding hoods, ear plugs, safety glasses, leather gloves and leather coats. Designer and fabricator Jason Beermann demonstrated the Jet Stream Machine. The machine uses an ultra-high pressure fine-point water stream to cut through stainless steel or other materials. The water jet machine is run by a 60,000 psi hydraulic pump. Items are designed using IGEMS software.

Youth were shown how to design a simple item on the software, take that information to the machine then cut out stainless steel key chains they were able to take home with them. Welder and fabricator Brandon Blume showed the youth step-by-step how to weld. Each participant received one-on-one instruction on using safety equipment and using mig and tig welders. They welded their initials and full names into steel. Future career possibilities in machining, design, manufacturing and sales were highlighted.