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

Union 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:

- Community Outreach
- Environment and Agriculture
- Food, Health and Well Being
- K-12 and Youth Development

Community Outreach

Union County continues to work to have a broader outreach by partnering with community resources. Early this year, Union County experienced the effects of two major company shutdowns that displaced a combined total of over 300 workers. The Union County Extension and CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) participated in a Career and Resource Fair to offer information and resources to families affected by the shutdowns.

Union County Extension celebrated its 100th year of serving the residents of Union County. Dr. John Lawrence, Vice President of Extension and Outreach, spoke at the event and presented a service plaque to the Extension Council. Over 150 community members attended this event.

We also participated in the annual Bright Eyes in the Park event sponsored by the Creston Animal Rescue League. CACFP offered books and Union County Extension offered information about 4-H and Clover Kids groups as well as Special Interest (SPIN) events to over 560 kids ages infant through 7th grade and their parents who were in attendance.

Union County continues to work with Americorps by offering summer internships to select high school and college students. The Americorps Interns organized and conducted a total ten day camps. Camp themes consisted of: All Around the World, Ag Adventures, One Foot in Front of the Other, Color My World, Un-Camp!, 4th of July!, SPA-rtty!, Dash and Dot Computer Challenge, Through a New Lens, and the Cooking Challenge. Over 100 kids benefited from these camps.

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.

Dan Waigand  
Extension Council Chair

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Terry Torneten  
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Larry Bailey  
Council Member

Ronda Driskill  
Council Member

Jerry Hartman  
Council Member

Jen Foglesong  
Council Member

Mark ide  
Council Member
Environment and Ag

Continuing instruction courses were provided to private and commercial pesticide applicators and manure applicators. Field Specialist, Aaron Sauegling, provided the programming for PPAT. Over 100 applicators from southern Iowa attended the session in Union County.

Union County hosted the 3-State Beef Conference (Iowa, Nebraska, and Missouri) with programming provided by field specialist, Chris Clark. Eighty-three people from throughout the state attended this event.

Union County also hosted the Stockmanship, Handling & Beef Quality Assurance Training that featured the basics of animal behaviors and cattle handling demonstration by Curt Pate. The event was sponsored by the Iowa Beef Industry Council and the Cattlemen’s Associations from Union, Adams, Clarke, and Ringgold counties. One hundred thirty people were in attendance for the Beef Quality Assurance Training provided by Field Specialist, Chris Clarke.

Health and Well-Being

Human Sciences specialists Barb Fuller, Sandra McKinnon, and Kim Brantner provide a variety of trainings throughout the year that reach clients across the spectrum.

Barb Fuller, Food and Nutrition Specialist, hosted ServSafe class for food service managers needing to be certified or recertified in safe food handling practices and Safe Food class for all food service workers. There were a total of thirteen participants in attendance for these classes.

Many children spend up to 50 hours a week or more in child care settings. Childcare providers play an important role in the overall health and development of the county’s youngest citizens. In the Fall of 2018, Sandra McKinnon, Family Financial Specialist, offered “Preschoolers and Pennies” a program designed to give childcare providers the information they need to teach the children in their care about fiscal responsibility. Fifteen providers attended this class. Additionally, eight providers attended the Cent$ible Retirement class where they learned how even a small amount can add up to a big savings towards their retirement.

Environment Rating Scales are nationally recognized tools used to assess and improve the quality of child care programs. Environment Rating Scale workshops offer step-by-step guidance for making helpful changes that can make a real difference in the work that providers do with young children. Kim Brantner, Family Life Specialist, offered the ECERS-3 class in four weekly sessions to fifteen providers who completed eight hours of training.

In addition to the programming offered by the Human Sciences specialists, there are several publications and resources that are made available to the public. Science of Parenting, Words on Wellness, News You Can Use, Spend Smart Eat Smart, Iowa Concern hotline and AnswerLine are some examples of each.
K-12 Youth Outreach

Union County takes pride in its 4-H program and although the youth program saw some changes this year with a new County Youth Coordinator, the program continues to grow. 2018 saw an increase in enrollment from 267 participants in 2017 to a record 307 in 2018! Additionally, there were 96 Clover Kids enrolled. There were 13 youth council members who provided extra learning opportunities for 4-Hers and extra support during county fair. They planned the 4-H Awards Banquet, hosted the County Fair Extravaganza on Kids Day, and participated in a team-building event at the Escape Chamber.

Eight youth traveled to Ames for “Your Passport to Adventure” Youth Conference in June. The delegates participated in fun educational activities and workshops during the three-day experience. We partnered with the Gibson Memorial Library to offer several SPIN events to kids in Union County including I-pad Photography, Dash and Dot, and Coding workshops. There were fifteen youth and their families who joined up for a visit to a local tree farm! Each event left kids eager to return with their friends to learn more!

Additional opportunities for youth to be involved in STEM activities in Union County include Junior Lego League, First Lego League and the high school Robotics Club. Two teams participated in a regional competition in December.

County Extension Staff

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ISU Extension and Outreach

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