Meeting Local Needs 2014

County Extension Staff
Nancy Carr
Office Administrator/Bookkeeper
Kaela Foor
County Youth Coordinator

Van Buren 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:
* Agricultural Development
* Food and the Environment
* Youth and Education

Jill Chaplin
Sandra Coffman
Steve Duke
David Hellwig
Steve Kisling
Darrell Kruse
Shirley Munford
Kathy Noll
Will Whitaker

ISU Extension in Van Buren County
701 Broad Street, Suite 2
P.O. Box 456
Keosauqua, IA 52565
Phone: (319) 293-3039
Fax: (319) 293-3919
www.extension.iastate.edu/vanburen

ISU Extension and Outreach provides educational opportunities for economic development, food and the environment, health and well-being, and K-12 youth outreach. We meet local needs, so Van Buren County can be an even better place for the next generation.

Steve Kisling
Extension Council Chair
Sue Henderson
Regional Director

Agriculture

A Farm Tour Field Day was held. Topics that were presented were: Beef facilities, beef operations—what works/what doesn’t work, cover crops. This program gives ag producers and ag businesses a chance to meet with ISU field specialists and have their questions answered.

A meal was served by the Fox River 4-Hers 4-H club as a fundraiser.

Three Ag Outlook/Farm Bill Workshops were held. Managing increased cost and decreasing margins is an area where today’s producer turns to their lender, input supplier, Extension, neighbor, and other agricultural business professionals for advice. This workshop helped prepare participants to make those important production decisions this winter.

Sixty-five private pesticide applicators completed educational training programs in Van Buren County. Education focuses on protecting our environment and maintaining the world’s safest food supply. The latest in research and technical information is provided to agribusinesses consultants so they are able to assist their clients.
Cooking for a Crowd

This is an interactive workshop sharing how to prepare safe food. How does food become unsafe? How do we protect guests and customers from food borne illnesses? Find answers while learning the basics of preventing food borne illnesses. You’ll have fun and leave with lots of resources and ideas for assuring safe food as well as a certificate to show your commitment to serving safe food.

This program is for the organizations/volunteers in the community who serve food to the public in the Villages of Van Buren.

Day Camps

Extension focused on summer day camps which have proven to be a cost effective way to reach more children. Our day camps were open to all children, not just 4-Hers. Day Camp is a great option for youth who want the camp experience without having to stay overnight. The themes for our day camps this year were dinosaurs, vet science, and forces of nature. The attendees enjoyed hands-on learning activities and making new friends.

Beekeeping Classes

Educational classes attended by 23 interested apiarists.

Services and Programs

Provided to Help Van Buren County Residents in Their Daily Lives

Such as:
- Commercial Pesticide Applicator Continuing Instruction Courses & Study Materials
- Identifying Insects
- Diagnosing Tree Problems
- Farmland Lease Forms
- Landowner & Tenant Farm Lease Workshops
- Canner Testing
- Strengthening Families
- Private Pesticide Application
- Gardening, Lawn, Pests, and Homeowner Questions
- Nutrition
- Custom Rate Survey
- 4-H Clubs, Project workshops, leadership training for adults and youth
- Pasture Walk
- Food Quality Safety Assurance
- And Many More

K-12 Youth Outreach

4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential working and learning in partnership with caring adults. The Iowa 4-H Youth Development Program provides opportunities for youth to develop skills they can use now and throughout their life. The 2013-2014 4-H program was a huge success in Van Buren County. The 4-H program had 157 members enrolled in 10 clubs led by 21 leaders. We also had 38 Clover Kids. The members were involved in many activities throughout the year which included a spring benefit buffet/silent auction, weigh-ins, Halloween party, and county and state fair.

The importance of volunteering is stressed throughout the 4-H activities.

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