We are growing ideas that make a difference in your life, your family, and your community. We have a dedicated staff of trained professionals delivering educational programs in agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, and community and economic development. The Mercer County Cooperative Extension Office is your connection to the University of Kentucky and the world. You’ll see some key numbers in this report. However, the numbers do not show you the impact of our work. This report shows the faces behind some of the numbers.

The Mercer County Cooperative Extension Service is growing...
Fall of 2012 Mercer County Master Gardeners and volunteers broke ground on an Outdoor Education Center. The demonstration garden will focus on vegetable growing techniques and gardening methods for the home gardener. The project is being funded by: a grant from Kentucky Agriculture Development Fund grant secured by Mercer County 4-H, sponsorship from Mercer County Conservation District and Mercer County Cooperative Extension District Board and individual donors. We plan to start utilizing the facilities in the spring 2013, so we encourage you to stop by and learn about new methods to grow your vegetables.

Reaching out to Mercer County

Educational Programs
- Programs presented 520
- Total participants 15,233

Educational Contacts
- Clientele visits 766
- Telephone consultations 3,987
- Newsletters distributed 21,992
- Volunteer Development
  - Volunteers 300
  - Volunteer hours 2,015
  - Clientele reached by volunteers 12,658

Making an IMPACT

Family & Consumer Sciences Statistics:
- 4 organized clubs with 37 members
- 5 special interest groups with 120 members
- 5 bi-monthly newsletters – 500 individuals

Agriculture & Natural Resources Statistics:
- 324 Plant Disease/Insect/Weed Identifications
- 508 Fertilizer Recommendations
- 10 Monthly Newsletters; 5 Quarterly Newsletters
- 1500 Office Calls ~ 149 Farm/Home Visits

4-H Youth Development Statistics:
- Total Youth participating - 2201
- 36 School Clubs with 1145 members
- 18 Specialty Clubs with 436 members
- 75 Adult leaders and 69 Teen leaders

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating. Disabilities accommodated with prior notification.
Extension Staff takes an active role in community and economic development. We focused efforts on marketing the festival, online advertising efforts were significantly increased this year through development of a new website, improved Facebook page and advertising and features in Edible Louisville Magazine, Louisville Courier Journal. We also began placing painted concrete cows around Harrodsburg to promote the festival year round and develop more awareness of the cattle industry. The 2013 festival will be held May 31-June 1 at Mercer County Fairgrounds, Harrodsburg.

**Estate Planning**
Kentucky consistently lags behind other areas of the United States in household income indicators, including personal income, population living below the poverty line, unemployment and revolving debt loads (FCS Strategic Plan, 2011). Extension collaborated with local banks, funeral homes, and financial advisors to offer three major programs. Serving more than 120 individuals, a QuickBooks Seminar, Estate Planning and Budget Basics programs were held to address some of the financial challenges that exist.

**Did you know?**
We offer free soil testing and you can also borrow tools and equipment. We have a grain moisture tester, soil probes, hay sampling probes, moister/temperature probe, sprayer calibrator, soil compaction meter, electrical conductivity meter, and measuring wheel. Also each year we give out free calendars and a wide variety of Cooperative Extension publications to the public.

**Community Initiative…**
**7th Annual Kentucky’s Fort Harrold Beef Festival**
The entire Mercer County Cooperative Extension Staff takes an active role in community and economic development. We focused efforts on marketing the festival, online advertising efforts were significantly increased this year through development of a new website, improved Facebook page and advertising and features in Edible Louisville Magazine, Louisville Courier Journal. We also began placing painted concrete cows around Harrodsburg to promote the festival year round and develop more awareness of the cattle industry. The 2013 festival will be held May 31-June 1 at Mercer County Fairgrounds, Harrodsburg.

**Farm to School Initiative**
In the fall of 2011, 203 Burgin School Students participated in Farm to School Program. Partners were able to offer locally grown food in the cafeteria; provide taste testing of various produce in different settings; allow students to purchase their own produce from the farmers market; and give family consumer science students an opportunity to cook with local produce. This is now a new market for local growers to sell their produce and allows them to even expand their production to meet this new demand.

**Enhancing Agricultural Production**
Livestock and crop production continue to be significant sources of income for Mercer County farmers. Four programs were held with MCCA on topics including dairy production, cattle health, marketing and forages. Multi county meetings included feed crops, grain crops and tobacco production.

**Master Gardener program**
The 12-session program focuses on botany, home fruits, vegetable gardening, plant propagation, woody ornamentals, plant pathology, annual and perennial flowers, lawn care, entomology, and soils. Participants are required to donate at least thirty hours of their time toward a worthy project in their communities, as well as serving as advisors to other homeowners.

**Agriculture in the Classroom**
FarmScool Week is held each year to increase students awareness about where food comes from and how it is grown. Over 1300 students had the opportunity to go Farmin’ on the Playground to see, touch, hear, smell and learn up close about different livestock and crops.
Mercer County Celebrates MLK Jr. Day
Over 200 people participated in the 2012 event that included a pancake breakfast, march and program that honored the life of MLK Jr. and his vision of service. As one participant stated, “[it] helps everyone to sense the advantage of unity”

Healthy Choices (Milk Sampling at Senior Center)
Informing the public on the importance of proper nutrition and health benefits has been a focus with low-income audiences at a local grocery store (with high SNAP redemption rates), Senior Commodities Distribution with Bluegrass Community Action, and the Mercer County Senior Citizens Center. This 48 hours of direct contact with approximately 1890 people sharing regular nutrition information has increased call-in requests for information and visibility of the Mercer County Extension.

Meltdown Mercer County (MMC)
Offered in three 10-week programs utilizing the Weight the Reality Series, Basics, Body Image and Get Moving Curriculums. Extension partnered with the Harrodsburg Herald for a community fitness competition, the programs have reached over 200 people.

Country Ham Project
For the last 12 years, Mercer County 4-H has had over 300 youth to complete the 4-H Country Ham Project. This value added project has given youth the opportunity to learn about the process, history, and science of curing hams. This also briefly covers issues such as food safety, meat production, basic chemistry principles, and food preservation. In addition, youth also develop their public speaking skills by presenting a speech about hams at KY State Fair.

Social Networking...and My Future
Focused on how online social networks impact youth. The information and photos they post as early as middle school can have impact on their future. The information and photos display in most instances what type of person they are from their personality to their character. 130 Middle school youth participated in increasing the awareness on the connection of internet habits and their future.

4-H Cloverbuds, Continue to Grow
5-8 year old youth are learning about the limitless opportunities available in 4-H. Youth participate in monthly club meetings and events. In addition, Mercer County had 42 youth to attend overnight camp.

School Enrichment Events
Safety Day (300 - 6th grade)
Earth Day (284 - 5th grade students)
Reality Store (510 - 8th/10th grade students)
Healthy Kids Day (291 - 4th grade students)
Did you know...

- Mercer County has 1,111 farm operations
- Mercer County ranks 3rd in alfalfa hay production
- Mercer County has one of the only organized 4-H Paintball Clubs in U.S.
- 61 Mercer County 4-H Youth volunteered over 1,426 hours over the last year.

2012 Celebration of Morrill Act
In 1862, President Lincoln signed into law the Morrill Act, a groundbreaking piece of legislation establishing America's land-grant university system.

Justin Smith Morrill, the visionary senator from Vermont who championed the notion that access to higher education should not be limited to the elite.

The act Morrill championed opened the door of opportunity for every woman and man with the talent and motivation to attend an institution of higher education. Ultimately, the Morrill Act democratized higher education for the masses. University of Kentucky is land-grant university for the state of Kentucky.

Mercer County 4-H is a Heart of Kentucky United Way Partner Agency. The support of United Way allows us to offer programming for the youth of Mercer County. Funds are used to provide materials, equipment, scholarships for youth to participate in 4-H clubs, events and activities.

Mercer County Extension Council:
David Hopewell, Chair   Jack Hood, Vice Chair
Cara Hazelwood, Secretary

Mercer County Extension District Board:
Dale Cinnamon, Chair   Jared Baker
Tim Ellis, Vice Chair   Brenda Semones
Gina Moffitt, Secretary Kathryn Tuggle
Jack Hood, Treasurer
Milward Dedman, Judge Executive

Do you have the desire to join and get connected with others in our community? There lots of ways to do this. Perhaps you would like to join one the Family & Consumer Sciences Groups, Commodity Groups, or become a 4-H member or 4-H volunteer. In addition, we are in need of volunteers to assist with Kentucky Fort Harrod Beef Festival or Mercer County Fair and other related Cooperative Extension Events. Please contact us for more information, we look forward to hearing from you.

Stay Informed
If you would like more information about our current programs and current events, you have several options. If you would like to be added to any of our newsletter lists just call or drop by our office.

Radio - Tune into WHBN at 8:10 AM to hear Luci or WRNZ at 7:34 AM to hear Linda on the County Agents Corner.

Webpage - http://ces.ca.uky.edu/mercer

Visit our pages:
Mercer County Cooperative Extension Service
Mercer County 4-H (KY)
Mercer County Farmers Market

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