



EXTENSION IN ACTION

Serving Henry, Mercer,
Rock Island, and Stark Counties

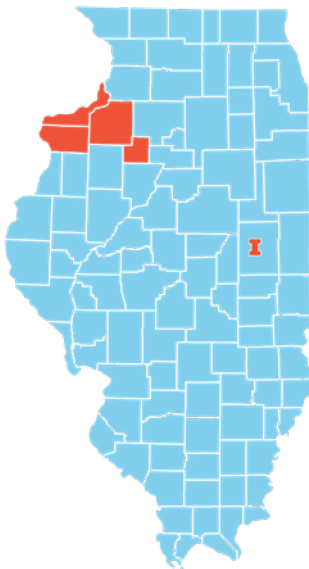
ILLINOIS EXTENSION 2022





Jenny Garner
County Director

We are here to help navigate these challenging times with expert care.



What a year! In 2022, we saw record attendance at many of our programs, with people eager to return to in-person programs offered by our expert University of Illinois Extension staff. Whether it was the Winter Wellness event where adults and youth enjoyed classes, soup samples, and a nature walk at Rock Island’s Black Hawk State Historic Site, the *Precision Management Practices and Carbon Markets 101* workshop for local farmers, the Farm in the Park lunch fundraiser with hands-on activities at the City of Galva’s Veteran’s Park, or the 4-H youth Holiday Make and Take workshop at the Viola Rec Center – fun and learning was had by all who came to participate.

We are fortunate to have 250 trained Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, and 4-H volunteers who are dedicated to the mission of Extension. They offer countless hours of service and support the many ways in which people access our programs. We also work with 320 partner agencies to identify critical issues

pertinent to our service region that are not currently being met by other institutions and agencies. Through ongoing needs assessments, programming is developed using the latest research and information available and delivered to those target audiences.

We remain ever thankful to the county boards, foundations, home and community education, businesses, and individual donors who provide the necessary support for us to do our work. We also express appreciation to those who step in to lend a hand. With you, we are able to provide practical education to help people, businesses, and communities, solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.

Our best wishes to you! Come on 2023 – let’s do more great things together!

Jenny Garner
County Extension Director



Illinois Extension Makes an Impact

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's land grant mission thrives each day through Extension's programs, resources, knowledge, and dedicated staff that are responsive to five grand challenge themes:



Community:
Support Strong and Resilient Residents



Economy:
Grow a Prosperous Economy



Environment:
Sustain Natural Resources at Home and in Public Spaces



Food:
Maintain a Safe and Accessible Food Supply



Health:
Maximize Physical, Mental, and Emotional Health

2022 Engagement

Extension leaders, staff, and stakeholders define priorities that create meaningful, mission-centered outcomes throughout the state:

643 Communities Served	720K+ Program Attendees	14.5M+ Webpage Views	22.9M+ Social Media Impressions	900K+ YouTube Views
488 Educational Sessions/Week (25K+ Annually)	95 Online Courses Accessed by 12K+ People	7,062 Local Government Education Webinar Reach	1,807 4-H Clubs	178,341 4-H Affiliations

Partnerships

Resource Generation

5,941 Program Volunteers	269 Community Gardens	1,030 School Partners	\$15,732,391 Value of Volunteer Contributions	\$223,639 Value of Donated Garden Produce
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The Junior Rock Island Horse Bowl Team were State Champions in 2022!

University of Illinois Extension is at your service!

This annual report highlights some of the ways Illinois Extension supported our community and the people of our service area the past year. Through our educational programs and resources we strive to:

- Build future leaders and give youth opportunities to gain experiences by doing as they build their citizenship, leadership, and life skills in our 4-H programs.
- Provide farmers and producers with the resources, trainings, and information they need to build sustainable and profitable agricultural practices.
- Support healthy environments and sustainable gardening practices through education, outreach, and master volunteers.
- Inspire positive behaviors in health and wellness and provide tools for chronic disease management.
- Expand food security and resources through our Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs.
- Develop thriving and safe communities and informed and connected leaders through our community and economic development programs.

Program impacts by the numbers:

Numbers alone don't tell a story. Behind each of these statistics are real people whose lives are positively impacted by Illinois Extension. Here's an example of our reach:

- We are proud of the 5,085 youth served through 4-H programs and the nearly 1,000 youth who are members in 56 4-H clubs in Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Stark counties. These members showcased their knowledge in over 150 project areas by entering 2,220 exhibits at our county fairs. These "learn by doing" opportunities are made possible with the assistance of 167 outstanding 4-H volunteers.
- Over 100 Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers extend our educational mission to help others learn to grow. They provided \$152,938 in service and contributed 1,308 lbs. of fresh produce from their community gardens to help fight food insecurity. That food was valued at over \$2,000!
- In partnership with 16 K-12 schools, seven early childhood centers, and 27 non-profit agencies, our local SNAP-Ed program led over 400 nutrition education classes and served 7,000 people in improving diet quality, physical activity, and food access.



Poverty simulations raise awareness of the impacts of poverty

Poverty is a reality for many individuals and families, but may be difficult to truly understand for those who haven't experienced it. Illinois Extension's Poverty Simulation gives participants a chance to experience the challenges that people in poverty face every day. During this interactive immersive experience, participants take on the identity of someone facing poverty and try to pay for monthly basic needs. The goal of the program is to stimulate community-driven conversations about poverty and how it impacts families and the businesses and organizations that work to alleviate it. Those who participate say it is one of the best tools they have found to begin the conversation and take action. If you have a group or organization interested in participating in a poverty simulation, call the office at (309) 756-9978.



Farm in the Park events showcase agriculture and food sciences

Illinois Extension offers a fun day of ag-inspired activities at Farm in the Park events held in Mercer and Henry counties each summer. The events give families and community members a chance to explore agriculture in a variety of ways. Visitors see farm animals at the petting zoo; make and take crafts; and simulate picking apples, gathering eggs, and milking a cow at "farmer for a day" stations. They sample *Eat.Move.Save* recipes and play games to learn the importance of staying healthy and active. Master Gardeners distribute information and answer gardening questions. Community members look forward to these events each summer.



New Winter Wellness Event inspires healthy living

The new Winter Wellness Family Event held at Singing Bird Nature Center in Rock Island in February helped the public explore ways to be healthy in mind, body, and spirit. Participants sampled healthy soup recipes, learned about the eight dimensions of wellness, and explored the link between spending time in nature and their mental and physical health. Master Gardeners assisted visitors learn about birds from the Midwest and what they can do to support their life cycle. 4-H offered hands-on nature crafts and a scavenger hunt. Kids learned about winter weather from Mercer County Ag Literacy activities. Visitors were encouraged to hike through the surrounding Black Hawk State Park where winter wellness tips were posted on signs along the park trails. The Hauberg Museum was also open for visitors to learn about the Sauk and Meskwaki tribes through interpretive maps, artifacts, and seasonal dioramas.



Stomp Out Hunger raises awareness and food donations

About 10% of residents face food insecurity in these local communities. Illinois Extension SNAP-Education programs, in collaboration with a network of volunteers and community partners, are addressing food insecurity in locally relevant ways. During Hunger Action Month in September, Extension invited the public to help feed their neighbors. Food donations were collected at Extension offices. Extension hosted Hunger Action Day events in Rock Island and Galva, posted hunger awareness information on social media, published newspaper articles and television interviews on the need for food donations, and worked with Mercer County schools to support food banks.





Helping people and communities prepare for the unexpected

University of Illinois Extension is at the forefront of assisting Illinoisans be prepared for disasters and is establishing supportive disaster networks in local communities.

The impacts of a natural or human-caused disaster can be devastating for those involved, affecting many facets of a community and disrupting local economy. Building a resilient community is the best way to withstand and recover from disasters.

Russell Medley, community and economic development educator, has focused on this important area of disaster preparedness. He chairs Disaster Ready Quad Cities, a collaboration of nearly 50 emergency responders and non-profit agencies ready to organize volunteers, set up resource centers, collect donations, manage shelters, and other vital tasks when disasters occur.

Russell is also using his expertise on a variety of state and national disaster programs:

- Working with a team of Extension educators from Illinois, Missouri, and Nebraska to develop materials to help communities across the U.S. establish COADs, Community Organizations in Disaster.
- Developing a county-specific disaster risk assessment tool which integrates economic development planning with disaster preparedness for rural communities in Illinois. It will improve the ability for counties and cities to develop a community resiliency plan. The project was a collaboration of Illinois Extension educators and specialists and a graduate student from the University of Illinois Department of Urban and Regional Planning.
- Updating the state hazard mitigation plans for the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. Having this plan in place means the state can receive critical funds should the need arise.



Russell Medley, community and economic development educator, offers Disaster Preparedness at Project Now in Rock Island.

Extension prepares people for emergencies

With incidences of natural disasters rising, the more people prepare, the faster a community can recover. Being prepared can reduce fear, anxiety, and losses that accompany disasters. Illinois Extension produced a free, online series to help be more aware of the potential risks in their communities and how to plan for all aspects of their lives during emergencies.

During a 5-week grant-funded series, *Be Prepared When Disaster Strikes*, Illinois Extension educators covered:

1. *Emergency Kits and Communication Plans*: Russell Medley, community and economic development
2. *Building an Emergency Food and Water Supply*: Kristin Bogdonas, nutrition and wellness
3. *Impact of Hunger and Health in Disasters*: Tayler Louscher, SNAP-Ed
4. *Tree Management Before and After Disasters*: Emily Swihart, horticulture
5. *Financial Emergency Preparedness*: Camaya Wallace Bechard: consumer economics.

A social media campaign highlighting disaster preparedness resources from the series was promoted during National Preparedness month in September. In-person workshops were held in Rock Island, Geneseo, Aledo, and Kewanee. Participants received a free emergency kit.



Watch the *Be Prepared When Disaster Strikes* Series go.illinois.edu/DisasterPrepVideos



Helping small towns thrive and grow

Small towns that serve rural communities are a critical component to the economic vitality of Illinois. When these communities thrive with small businesses, health care, broadband, and other essential services, we all benefit from the jobs, tax revenue, and improved lives of the residents. These things don't just happen, they are brought about by committed people who want to make their community stronger.

To help them succeed, Illinois Extension community and economic development educator Russell Medley launched the Emerging Cities of the Quad Cities (ECQC) networking group for economic developers in Henry, Mercer, Stark, and rural Rock Island counties.

Participants exchange ideas, problem solve, and discuss how to prepare. Bi-monthly meetings at the Henry/Stark counties office in Galva cover a broad range of topics, such as collaborative partnerships, business retention and expansion, community marketing, adopting energy efficiencies and alternative methodologies, zoning and infrastructure issues, and promoting an entrepreneurial-spirited community. Sharing knowledge and successful strategies are the primary goals of this group.



For more information, contact Russell Medley
(309) 756-9978
rmedley@illinois.edu

Maintaining a robust workforce

A strong labor force is key for a healthy and dynamic economy that can work for all. It's the mission behind the Workforce Development Board for Henry, Rock Island, and Mercer counties. Russell helped update the group's 2022 regional workforce plan which focused on the effects of COVID-19 on the workforce, shortages across industries, impacts of a

rapidly aging workforce, as well as changes in occupational demands by industry. It also explored how to recruit fast growing professions. The snapshot will allow the Workforce Development Board to work on remedies, while also providing employment assistance, job training, and education assistance to keep the region's workforce strong to benefit us all.



Helping legislators and community leaders stay current

Illinois communities need leaders who provide clear direction, inspire creative problem solving, and create safe environments to work, learn, and grow. Through the Local Government Education program, Illinois Extension is helping leaders connect with experts on economic development strategies, budgeting and planning, ethics, regulations and compliance, and community initiatives.

In 2022, 59 local government officials from Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Stark counties attended local government sessions to learn more about Illinois broadband, geothermal energy, grant opportunities, sustainable communities, and other timely topics. Through these educational programs, Illinois Extension is helping our local leaders be better informed about issues, and connected to resources that can help the communities they serve.



Building a healthier community

From food safety to chronic disease prevention and management to overall nutrition, Illinois Extension is committed to helping people across the state live the best versions of their lives. Nutrition and wellness educator Kristin Bogdonas offers a variety of programs and training opportunities for individuals, community groups, childcare providers, and food service staff. Her work gives people the skills, motivation, tools, and social support to change their behaviors for improved health.

Here are some highlights:

The Project of the Quad Cities serves people living with HIV/AIDS. Kristin led a series of programs on immune health, diet trends, diabetes management, and foods to fight inflammation. With Illinois Extension's support and resources, their clients are learning how they can take a holistic approach to take charge of their health.

Illinois Extension is helping nutrition and food service professionals in Rock Island County make a positive impact on the people they serve each year through professional development. Kristin led "Heart Health Updates and Meal Planning" training for their membership, giving them tools and knowledge so they can make healthy and informed decisions to benefit all who use their services.

Offering professional trainings is an important part of the Illinois Extension mission. By keeping teachers, healthcare workers, food service staff, and other employees informed about the latest research and best practices, this shared knowledge can reverberate to benefit those they serve. In 2022, Kristin was part of the team that surveyed the needs of family and consumer science teachers across the state. The goal is to better understand their roles and needs, both in the classroom and professionally. These results will be analyzed in 2023 and will inform future training topics that can be delivered by Illinois Extension educators.



Listen to Wellness Wakeup Call Podcast
go.illinois.edu/WellnessWakeup



Kristin Bogdonas, nutrition and wellness educator, shares a lesson on building an emergency food supply at the Becoming an Outdoorswoman event by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Sharing best practices for better health

Illinois Extension educators develop curriculum to share their findings with the community. Kristin co-wrote a lesson on "Cultivating Your Own Blue Zone" and co-presented it statewide to more than 100 people for the Home Community Education webinar series and again at local workshops in Mercer and Rock Island counties.

Blue zones are geographic areas with a higher percentage of people living well into their 90s and 100s. There are also lower rates of age-related chronic diseases in these areas. Our behaviors, attitudes, and environment also influence our longevity. Through this program, participants see that by adopting positive health behaviors, they can add more years to their life and more life to their years.

Bringing nutrition news to thousands through new media sources

Illinois Extension shares its knowledge in a many ways, including online cooking videos. Kristin co-wrote a research article, "Best Practices in Recipe Demonstration Videos," for Extension professionals as part of a multi-state collaboration. It was published in the 2022 Journal of the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences.

Writing timely articles for the public is an excellent way for Illinois Extension educators to disseminate their research. Through her blog, "Healthy Lifestyles that Last;" podcast on WVIK Public Radio, "Wellness Wake Up Call;" and newspaper column in the Quad City Times, "Start the Week Off Right;" Kristin helps over 500,000 people in their health journey.





Participants at Bethel Wesley enjoyed exploring new recipes during their Create Better Health lesson.



SNAP-Ed helps build nutrition and wellness skills through direct education

Illinois Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-Ed) focuses on improving diet quality and physical activity, increasing food access, and creating community collaborations to affect changes for those we serve.

SNAP-Ed community outreach workers Darcy Eggimann, Araceli Garcia, Alyssa Klauer, and Hannah Wright, improve health outcomes by providing research-based nutrition education to participants at early childhood centers, public schools, food pantries, and non-profit agencies. During the "Illinois Junior Chef" summer cooking camps and classroom visits throughout the school year, they help youth build a foundation to make healthy choices as they move into adulthood. They also share information and classes with adults at public housing sites, food pantries, farmers markets, Mercado on 5th, and other community events.

New curriculum teaches adults to create nourishing meals

Community outreach workers were trained on "Create Better Health" curriculum developed by Utah State Extension. It teaches adults how to create recipes based on what they already have in their kitchen. Each lesson contains similar components related to nutrition education. During their lessons, participants focus on a particular dish, such as soups, grain bowls, and sandwiches. Staff bring a variety of ingredients and the participants create a version of the dish using the ingredients available. Participants had a great time exploring ways to enhance a common dish and gained skills they can use to make nourishing foods at home using supplies they have.



SNAP-Ed helps improve access to nutritious, culturally relevant foods

SNAP-Ed team members Mitchell Walker, program coordinator, and Tayler Louscher, educator, work to effect policy, systems, and environmental changes to organizations and coalitions that serve SNAP-eligible audiences. Here's an example of that work:

Food insecurity disproportionately affects diverse populations, meaning those in need are less likely to find food that is unique to their culture. Imagine you are hungry and you visit a pantry and expect to find foods you know how to make based on your culture. Instead, you find unfamiliar foods and don't know how to prepare them. By providing culturally appropriate food, food pantries not only further their mission to address food insecurity, but when their clients know how to cook the food they receive, there is less food waste.

Tayler worked with the Illinois Public Health Institute to assist the River Bend Food Bank develop a culturally responsive food initiative. River Bend Food Bank has a very large service area covering 23 counties, 18 of which are in Illinois. Tayler worked on the nutrition committee, along with local experts from a variety of sectors, to help develop the plan. They surveyed food pantry guests, managers, and volunteers, and held focus groups to learn more about food preferences, needs, and barriers related to accessing preferred foods at food pantries. They focused on four groups: people from rural communities, people who identify as a person of color, people who were recent immigrants or refugees, and people who speak Spanish.

Once the research was collected, Tayler and her team created a nutrition policy to address the findings. After review by the leadership team, it will be adopted in 2023. Results will advance greater food equity for food bank clients in our service area.



Mercer County 4-H members were excited to receive their Growth Awards during their 4-H Achievements event.



Supporting strong and resilient youth

Illinois Extension's 4-H club experience creates opportunities and environments for all youth to thrive, today and into the future. With the assistance of 167 volunteers, 4-H educator Jennifer Peterson and program coordinators McCala Crawford, Tracy Fowler-Pestle, and Teresa Kirwan provided youth with a variety of opportunities to find their spark and build their skills.

In 2021-22 the 4-H program reached nearly 6,000 youth through community clubs, after-school programs, in-school lessons, and workshops. The theme of the year was skill building. From in-depth workshops on specific projects to soft skill development, 4-H youth spent the year putting the “head” and “hands” portion of the pledge together for the betterment of themselves and their community.



Cooking Club: Twenty-eight junior high students from Rock Island participated in a weekly cooking class called “Cooking through the Decades.” Led by Jennifer, each month focused on a different decade, highlighting foods that were invented or popularized in that time period. From the 1920s through today, they discussed how world wars, technological advancements, and increased globalization affected how people cooked and ate through the years. The class was done online so many parents and grandparents joined in and shared stories about their experiences with food. In particular, the 1950s tuna casserole week brought out many childhood memories for the adults.



Members of the Stark County Century Clovers planted trees at the high school in Toulon as part of the Greener Communities Project.

Tree Plantings: 4-H and Soil & Water partnered in all four counties in the Greener Communities Project. Each county received 25 oak trees to plant at a community location selected. 4-H community club youth learned how to plant and care for the trees before assisting with the plantings in early April. In addition to Toulon, trees were planted at the Isaak Walton League in Geneseo, Sherrard Elementary School, and Illiniwek Forest Preserve. It was a great collaboration that allowed youth to put their “hands to larger service” and provide a benefit to the community that will last for years to come.

Civic Engagement: Thirty students from Edison Jr. High were nominated by teachers and administration to participate in a 4-H leadership and civic engagement group. The teens learned different styles of leadership and the importance of community involvement. Guest speakers from local and state governments and non-profits talked to students about career paths and volunteer opportunities. The group did a school needs assessment, resulting in a focus on school lunches. They put together a presentation with their research findings and recommendations, which they delivered to school administrators in May. Funds to support their project were provided by the Rock Island Community Foundation.

Project Focus Series: Illinois Extension held a series of workshops and special interest clubs in 2022 to give youth skill-building opportunities in specific 4-H project areas. Youth learned through hands-on experience from community members or 4-H staff with expert knowledge in the project area. The goal of each workshop was to give kids a good start on a project they could exhibit at their county fair. Workshops included cooking 101, jewelry making, visual arts clay, goats, CPR and health safety, sewing, fishing, food preservation, portrait drawing, photography, and shooting sports. These workshops helped 250 youth work on projects, build confidence, and learn new things.



The Goat SPIN Club gave youth the opportunity to learn how to care for and show goats in the show ring.

School Programs: 4-H provided opportunities for hundreds of youth to explore new programs through after school programs.

- Elementary students in Kewanee learned about grains in lessons from both 4-H and SNAP-Ed. Rock Island students explored natural sciences, cooking, and STEM lessons.
- 4-H is helping teens take action to promote understanding of mental health issues through two programs. Students in Moline High School’s adult skills class participated in the *Your Thoughts Matter* that gives them tools to help them talk about the issues, while Kewanee Junior High students explored *Mastering Mindful Moments* to learn about using different breathing techniques to improve focus and reduce stress.
- Multiple elementary classrooms across the unit participated in the embryology program, learning all about chickens during the 3-week incubation period and then caring for the chicks before they were returned to a farm.
- In June, a group of youth from Spring Forward Learning Center got an immersive agriculture experience, visiting the Zwicker Family Farm in Orion for a farm tour.



Students enjoy learning about topics such as pumpkins during classroom visits from the Mercer County Ag Literacy program.

Building agriculture literacy

Hundreds of youth in Mercer County are growing their knowledge of agriculture through hands-on lessons Illinois Extension and our partners share through the Mercer County Ag Literacy program. Coordinator Teresa Kirwan brings agriculture lessons to schools and organizes community events, such as Farm in the Park, safety day camps, and the Summer Ag Institute for teachers.



I Made That! helps youth develop cooking skills

Kristin Bogdonas, Extension nutrition and wellness educator, continued the “I Made That!” bi-monthly educational cooking program to help youth explore a variety of topics from their home kitchens. They receive an information booklet, recipes, activities, and supplies to complete a challenge. Youth learned about making healthy choices with back-to-school lunches and after-school snacks, ways to stay well in the winter, how to make ice cream, and more.

The popular program was enjoyed by 141 youth with an additional 1,500 booklets distributed through 4-H and public libraries across four counties. The unit now has a full year of education cooking kits that can be used for future programs.



The “I Made That” series gave youth the chance to build their cooking skills through lessons and resources they can do at home.



Protecting our natural resources for future generations of farmers

Illinois Extension is committed to helping farmers optimize their plant yields while reducing the amount of nutrients lost to the environment where they impact greenhouse gas emissions and air and water quality. Rachel Curry, watershed outreach associate, provides educational programs on best management practices for soil health and water quality as outlined in the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy. Her efforts cover the Lower Rock River and Flint-Henderson watersheds in northwestern Illinois.

Advanced Soil Health Training

Healthy soil is the foundation of productive, sustainable agriculture. When farmers understand how to manage their lands for improved soil health, they can enjoy greater profit and lessen run-off of nutrients and sediment. These practices also result in cleaner water, healthier soils, and healthier crops. Illinois Extension is part of a statewide effort to extend soil health knowledge for every farmer through a “train the trainer” program. The Bi-State Advanced Soil Health Training, which Rachel helped lead the past two years brings together Illinois cover crop specialists, farmers, farm managers, agricultural retailers, and consultants to get in-depth knowledge on multiple aspects of soil health. Participants that complete the training help others find ways to improve soil health on their land.



Participants at the March 2022 Bi-State Advanced Soil Health Training will now be able to assist other farmers.



Find soil health training graduates
go.illinois.edu/SoilTrainers



Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Podcast and Blog

Rachel co-produces the Nutrient Loss Reduction Podcast that features interviews with experts and farmers about conservation practices. Forty-eight episodes have been produced, with topics ranging from managing water through edge of field practices, soil sampling, and VRT; to soil carbon, IPM decisions, and more. In December of 2022 a supplemental blog was produced.



Find them both here
go.illinois.edu/NLRSPodcast
go.illinois.edu/NLRS_blog

Mill Creek Watershed Plan

Rachel works with the Rock Island Soil and Water Conservation District and Northwater Consulting to create a watershed plan for the Mill Creek and Mud Creek watersheds. Several stakeholder meetings have been held to receive input on the plan. The development of a watershed plan is a large-scale effort to assess and document resource concerns throughout the watershed to generate future cost-share opportunities for landowners, address natural resource issues, and improve water quality. Using a watershed approach is an innovative tactic to reducing nutrient losses from agricultural landscapes.

Biennial Report Update

Find out about the progress the state has made in reducing nutrient loss by tuning in to a summary of the 238-page Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy Biennial Report, available at go.illinois.edu/everydayenvironmentrecordings.

Farm Series – Carbon Markets

Carbon markets are changing rapidly, and it can be difficult for a farmer to know where to start. In February, this Illinois Extension unit held a workshop to a packed room of farmers from Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Stark counties. They learned about the current state of carbon markets in Illinois and questions they should ask before joining a market. The speakers for the event were Gary Schnitkey and Sarah Sellars from University of Illinois and Lou Liva with Precision Conservation Management.



Master Gardeners: a sustaining force for community gardens



Helping others learn to grow

Master Gardeners are a valuable team of volunteers that dedicate their time and talents to serving local communities. Their dedication to continued learning and service enables the resources of Illinois Extension to be exponentially multiplied. Early in 2022, six new volunteers completed the extensive Master Gardener training program and joined forces with over 100 volunteers. Their accomplishments achieved throughout the year cannot be overstated.

Through the *Grow at Home* program, more than 1,300 pounds of fresh produce were donated to local food pantries. These nutritious foods provide neighbors with healthy, diverse groceries to feed themselves and their families.

Similarly, Master Gardeners dedicated themselves to tending public gardens throughout the counties. These gardens accomplished a multipurpose goal of providing horticulture education, exposure to unique plant varieties, demonstrating sound maintenance methods, and providing access to green space for neighbors. These spaces contributed habitat for local wildlife, helped manage stormwater, and beautified the community. In addition, at the demonstration gardens, Master Gardeners were able to take a small bite out of Quad City hunger by donating over 1,000 pounds of garden produce to local food pantries.

Throughout the year, Master Gardeners offered a variety of education opportunities. This included the return of the long-running *Spring Series of Home Horticulture* which was met with great enthusiasm by over 100 interested gardeners. The experts shared tips on growing and using herbs, growing healthy trees and shrubs, new plant varieties, amazing facts about woodpeckers, carbon storage and soil health, and xeriscaping (gardening with minimal water).



Volunteers went above and beyond at the Quad City Flower and Garden show where they designed and built an educational garden, hosted a variety of educational presentations, provided expertise at the information booth, and helped event staff construct display gardens.

Volunteers of the Speakers Bureau responded to requests for speakers. Regular programming was delivered to residents of Woodridge Supportive Living in Geneseo. Attendees of ARC of the Quad Cities and Evergreen Club were also provided diverse and engaging horticulture programming.



Request a Master Gardener presentation
go.illinois.edu/MGSpeakersBureau



Sustaining our natural resources

Extension horticulture and natural resources programs give people the knowledge and tools they need to succeed in home and community gardens, landscape beautification, conservation practices, and assistance in sustaining our natural resources. Through generous partnerships and created opportunities, the horticulture team, led by Educator Emily Swihart, and Coordinator Tracy Jo Mulliken, is able to provide the public a diverse variety of education opportunities.

Community Connections: Serving in a leadership role on the local conservation partner group Bi-State Conservation Action Network (BiCAN), Illinois Extension hosted a three-part webinar series in March which focused on nature as a local resource. It connected local conservation experts and resources to homeowners and community members curious about land use for wildlife and water conservation. Through this partnership, Extension supports efforts of an annual Bio-Blitz that focuses on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a short period of time.

TV Appearances: An invitation for Emily to appear on a local television program, “Paula Sands Live,” expanded to a regular horticulture show. Topics covered on the show range from container gardening and summer watering advice, to invasive species threats and program promotion. Additional TV and radio appearances provided seasonal information, including dealing with Japanese beetles, the confirmation of jumping worms in Rock Island County, and an educational program in partnership with Scott County Master Gardeners.

Publications: Emily writes a monthly newsletter, “The Outsider,” as a timely resource to inspire horticulture adventures. Topics include winter birds, tree pruning, native plants, and natural Christmas trees. She also joined the Illinois Extension’s Good Growing blog team. Their weekly columns are read by thousands of people. This opportunity extends the reach of Extension information and brings in a broader diversity of information for our local readers.

Classes: In-person and virtual learning opportunities were shared with the public. Presentations were delivered at the Gardening in the Air virtual conference, Gateway Green Industry Conference, Quad City Flower and Garden Show, Spring Series, Four Seasons webinar series, Be Prepared when Disaster Strikes webinar series, Stormwater Management series, and more.



Emily Swihart, horticulture educator, presented a workshop as part of the Stormwater Management series.

Stormwater at Home Series

Stormwater runoff is water that is not absorbed into the soil and can come from homes, roads, commercial areas, and other places. It is often referred to as polluted runoff since it picks up and carries numerous pollutants, as well as soils, with it into our waterways. There are many environmental benefits to reducing runoff, and it can be done in ways that can enhance landscapes and natural areas.

Emily co-taught a four-part rainwater management workshop with Rachel Curry, watershed outreach associate. They provided stormwater management methods, plant selection, project design, landscape maintenance, and strategies from the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction program. Their work will continue in 2023 as they lead a hands-on rain garden building workshop for Illinois Extension at Riverside Gardens in Moline. The stormwater series is funded, in part, by Constellation – Quad Cities Station and Mel McKay Charitable Trust.





● \$765,911.00	State Funds/Match*
● \$390,680.00	County Board
● \$362,495.00	Federal SNAP Grant
● \$12,519.00	Grants
● \$19,748.78	Program Fees
● \$40,763.20	Foundations, Donations & Farm Bureau
● \$75,000.00	Smith Lever
● \$30,404.00	4-H Premiums



● \$679,998.10	Program Expenses and Salaries
● \$362,495.00	Federal SNAP Program
● \$13,522.72	Materials/Supplies
● \$80,475.46	Utilities/Rent
● \$75,000.00	Smith Lever
● \$21,192.71	Transportation
● \$30,496.64	4-H Awards

Financial Report

University of Illinois Extension is a three-way funding partnership between the State of Illinois, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the county boards in Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Stark counties. Our SNAP-Ed programs are funded by a federal grant from the United States Department of Agriculture.

These partnerships bring hundreds of thousands of programming dollars into the four counties, matching local contributions with state, national, and federal support. Many local business, foundations, and individuals provide additional support by donating through the local foundations, including to the Henry County 4-H Foundation, the Mercer County Extension and 4-H Foundation, the Rock Island County Extension and 4-H Education Foundation, and the Stark County 4-H Foundation. Support also comes from our local Extension Council and the Illinois 4-H Foundation. These resources are part of the local donation income that helps to sustain our programs.

**Note: State funds reflect receipt of past overdue state match that had previously been withheld.*

2022 Grants and Sponsorships

Illinois Extension educators collaborate on state team grants, as well as on local programming grants. All of these sources are vital in helping fulfill our educational mission.

Grants for projects specific to the unit:

- \$61,800: IL EPA Grant for IL Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy
- \$8,000: Ag in the Classroom Grant for Mercer County
- In-kind: NRA grant for ammunition for 4-H Shooting Sports
- \$5,000: Bayer's America's Farmers Grow Communities for 4-H
- \$3,500: Mel McKay Charitable Trust for horticulture
- \$3,300: National Extension Association for Family and Consumer Sciences Endowment Grant for disaster preparedness kits
- \$1,000: Constellation – Quad Cities Station for horticulture
- \$1,000: Rock Island Community Foundation for 4-H
- \$500: Big River Resources for agriculture

Community and Economic Development team grants

(supporting work by unit educator Russell Medley):

- \$325,000: IL Emergency Management Agency for Plan Updates
- \$50,000: Extension Disaster Education Network for COAD Material Development
- \$22,311: Hancock County Mitigation Planning
- \$7,625: Michigan State University Extension USDA Grant



STAFF

Jenny Garner
County Director

Kristin Bogdonas
Educator, Nutrition & Wellness

Rachel Curry
Watershed Outreach Associate,
Commercial Ag & Natural
Resources, Environment, and
Energy

Russell Medley
Educator, Community and
Economic Development

Jennifer Peterson
Educator, 4-H Youth
Development

Emily Swihart
Educator, Horticulture

Taylor Louscher
Educator, SNAP-Ed

Becky Buckrop
Program Coordinator,
Marketing & Local Fund
Development

McCala Crawford
Program Coordinator,
Rock Island County 4-H

Tracy Fowler-Pestle
Program Coordinator,
Mercer County 4-H

Teresa Kirwan
Program Coordinator, Henry
County 4-H and Mercer County
Ag Literacy

Tracy Jo Mulliken
Program Coordinator,
Horticulture & Agriculture

Mitchell Walker
Program Coordinator, SNAP-Ed

Darcy Eggimann
Community Worker, SNAP-Ed

Araceli Garcia
Community Worker, SNAP-Ed

Alyssa Klauer
Community Worker, SNAP-Ed

Hannah Wright
Community Worker, SNAP-Ed

Amy Spence
Office Support Specialist

Teresa Frakes
Office Support Assistant

Kristen VanDeVelde
Office Support Assistant

Paula West
Office Support Assistant

OFFICE INFORMATION

Henry & Stark Counties Extension

358 Front Street
Galva, IL 61434
Phone: (309) 932-3447
Fax: (309) 932-3454
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
8 AM - 4 PM (closed Noon - 12:30 PM)

Mercer County Extension

910 13th Street
Viola IL 61486
Phone: (309) 513-3100
FAX: (309) 513-3101
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
8 AM - 4 PM (closed Noon - 12:30 PM)

Rock Island County Extension

321 W 2nd Avenue
Milan, IL 61264
Phone: (309) 756-9978
FAX: (309) 756-9987
Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4 PM
(closed Noon - 12:30 PM)

ONLINE



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uie-hmrs@illinois.edu



go.illinois.edu/ILExtensionhmrsYouTube

Cover photo: Emily Swihart, horticulture educator, shares resources at an Illinois Extension booth at the Rhubarb Festival in Aledo.



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences

University of Illinois, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Local Extension Councils Cooperating.
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, please contact the event coordinator. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your needs.

The Illinois Nutrition Education Programs are funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

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