

# Program Accomplishments

University of Illinois Extension

Madison-St. Clair Unit

January - February 2009

## Agriculture and Natural Resources Enhancing Agricultural Safety Skills

- The **Illinois Pesticide Act** requires crop producers to become certified as private pesticide applicators in order to purchase and apply restricted-use pesticides. These products include the insecticides, Warrior, Force and Pounce, as well as the herbicides Atrazine, Gramoxone Max, and Harness. To help farmers become certified, University of Illinois Extension hosted pesticide safety education program clinics in January with 153 participating. This class prepares the participants for a closed-book 50-question exam.

## Specialty Crop Production

- The **2009 Horseradish School** held in Collinsville in support of the Horseradish Growers of Illinois brought together forty-one growers, processors and researchers from around the nation and Canada. The full day of information from University of Illinois researchers included *Progress in Horseradish Tissue Culture, 2009 Illinois Field Trial: Hot-Water Treatment and Use of Fungicides and Biofungicides for Management of Internal Discoloration of Horseradish Roots; Evaluating Efficacy of Fungicides and Biofungicides for Control of Internal Discoloration of Roots of Horseradish Plants Grown from Tissue Culture-Generated Sets; Fungi and Bacteria Associated with Roots; Long-Term Maintenance of Horseradish Tissue Cultures and more.*

## Natural Resources

- **Conservation Subdivisions**, a tour of Rock Hill Trails development for O'Fallon High School students showed the students how natural resources, specifically the use of native vegetation of ecosystems services play a role in planning, design, landscaping, and maintenance of this new conservation subdivision. Forty-eight students and their teachers participated in the workshop taught by Michaela Gerken, natural resources educator.

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## Home Horticulture Education

- Eighteen individuals accepted for training in the **Master Gardener program** in Madison and St. Clair Counties began in mid-January with training continuing until the first of May on a weekly basis. These Master Gardener trainees join the current 170 + active Master Gardeners in supporting the work of Extension's horticulture program. Master Gardener trainees learn about vegetable gardening, ornamental plants, small fruits, tree fruits, plant pathology, plant identification, environmental problems, herbicide use, insect control, soils and fertilization, annuals and perennials, and turf. Following classroom training, they will be working in a volunteer capacity for a minimum of 60 hours.
- Master Gardeners volunteer for Extension in the community in a wide variety of ways including sharing their knowledge through **community presentations**. Master Gardener Linda Nitchman, Glen Carbon, explained the Plant a Row program for members of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Plant a Row encourages gardeners to plant a bit extra that they can donate to their local food pantry.
- Master Gardener, Bill Klopfenstein from Edwardsville spoke with 56 members of the Mississippi Valley Garden Club about **Gardening with Native Plants**.
- **Green Gardening for Families** brought twelve to the Glen Carbon Library. Master Gardener, Linda Nitchman of Glen Carbon who taught the class hopes to see more families working together this summer to enjoy the fruits (and veggies) of their labor.
- Four Seasons Gardening, a 12-session program presented by University of Illinois Extension, includes a wide array of gardening and landscaping topics. Seminars for each of the four seasons are offered. The first session of the winter series, titled **Cool Season Vegetable Gardening**, focused on vegetables that can be grown in the cooler temperatures of late winter into early spring.

The series continued with **Spring Flowering Shrubs for the Home Landscape**. Participants expanded their flowering shrub palette beyond forsythia and lilac as they learned about the many different spring-blooming shrubs available.

- If the only blanket of green in your landscape is grass then you may be missing an opportunity to add texture, color and seasonal change to your daily vista. **Blooming and Evergreen Groundcovers** can enhance your landscape with plants that will outperform grass, require less water, no mowing and solve landscape problems. Twenty attended this program taught by Master Gardeners Julie Hamilton and Kim Bonacorsi, from Edwardsville to learn the how, where and what of selecting from a broad palette of leaf colors, blooms and textures. Participants gained an understanding of how to use ground covers to enhance the landscape's appearance as well as reduce the use of fertilizer, water and the need for weekly maintenance. Those attending will be sharing the information with another 20 groups to which they belong.

## Commercial Horticulture Education

- If they worked in lawn care, landscaping, nurseries, garden centers, golf courses or any other horticulture-related industry, they attended the **Gateway Green Industry Conference** 800 registrants and exhibitors descended upon the Gateway Convention Center, Collinsville for two days of classes, keynote



sessions, and a sold out commercial trade show which was 25% larger than in previous years.

Those working in the golf industry checked out classes such as *Understanding and Using PGR's on Golf Course Turf*, *Best Management Practices for Optimizing Soil Drainage and Soil Productivity*, *New tools for Managing Turfgrass Weeds on the Course*, *Weed Management Considerations* and *Creative Customer Service*. Tracks were available for sports turf management, landscape, arborists, bedding plants, parks and recreation, and public facilities as well.

The conference is the premiere commercial horticultural educational event in the St. Louis region with keynote speakers John Ball from South Dakota State University and Kaizad Irani, Landscape Design and Horticulture Program Director for Parkland College, Champaign.



Evaluation comments are extensive and include *excellent selection of programs. This is always good, but this one was one of the best!; both keynote speakers were outstanding; many times two good classes will be together. Vendors have good information available.*

### **Urbanization: Moving Away from Agricultural Roots**

- Fourth graders in Madison County took a look at livestock and their products during the January and February sessions of the Land of Illinois series. **Madison County C.A.R.E.E. (Conservation, Agricultural Resources, and Environmental Education)** program presented this lesson in 138 classrooms reaching 3,152 students.

Teacher workshops through CAREE included **The Seasons on the Farm**, a workshop teaching fun lessons, make and take activities. Twelve teachers attended.

The eighth grade Careers program in Highland and Edwardsville introduced students to the variety of horticultural careers.

CAREE is co-sponsored with Madison County Farm Bureau, Madison County Soil and Water Conservation Service, and University of Illinois Extension.

### **Community Development** **Developing Community Leadership**

- Illinois county officials are challenged to obtain necessary information to make informed decisions regarding policy and delivery of services. The goal of University of Illinois Extension is to provide county officials with opportunities to sharpen their skills and gain knowledge about their legal, administrative, and fiduciary responsibilities necessary to make informed decisions involving their constituency.

University of Illinois Extension programs provide local officials an opportunity to gain access to experts on current issues without leaving their home county. Presenters for the programs include university faculty, representatives of state

and federal agencies, and community leaders with experience in the issues and challenges faced by local officials.

In January county officials participated in the statewide program, **Bringing Home High Speed---What's Working**. What exactly is "high-speed" for residential and commercial purposes by current standards and how is it achieved? What are some innovative methods the State of Illinois and local communities are utilizing to bring high speed to rural and underserved areas? What are agencies and others doing outside of Illinois to successfully address high-speed needs in their areas? Ryan Croke, facilitator of the Illinois Broadband Deployment Council, and others addressed these questions related to the most pressing issue facing many communities

Local government across the United States, especially during this past year in Illinois, have come to realize the importance of reducing their vulnerability to natural and technological hazards. The February session, **It WILL Happen to You—Disaster Preparedness for Local Government—Creating Hazard Resilient Communities** provided approaches to building community resiliency through emergency management process of preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation.

## Consumer and Family Sciences

### Lowering Fat, Sugar and Salt in Diet

- In addition to the regular curriculum taught through the Family Nutrition Program (FNP), **4<sup>th</sup> grade health fairs** are very popular. Through an interactive game, students learn how much sugar is contained in various beverages. Students attending Wilson School, Granite City and Edwardsville School districts participated in February. Students were on a scavenger hunt complete with booklet containing a question to answer at each booth. Lights of red and green flashed in our booth helping the children to learn to make healthy choices. Approximately 700 youth participated in the activity.

### Food Safety

- If their Food Safety Manager Certificate expires this year, they needed to attend the **Refresher Course for Food Handlers**. This course focuses on sanitation, health, personal hygiene, and safe food handling practices. Presented by U of I Extension educators, this course meets the re-certification standards required by the Illinois Department of Public Health. Eleven participants in St. Clair County rated the course as exceptional noting changes they will be making in their commercial kitchens.
- The **Family Nutrition Program** serves lower income families in the area teaching food budgeting, food safety, and healthy meals. In January and February, over 6,000 individuals participated in the two county area with an additional 15,000 receiving educational information through educational fact sheets. The classes focused on helping families be active and eat healthy.
- The **Clean Hands, Healthy Bodies** program teaches this simple concept. In January and February, volunteers taught 332 third and fourth graders when and how to properly wash their hands through the **Clean Hands, Healthy Bodies**

program in partnership with the Madison and St. Clair County Health Departments.

The strategy seems simple enough, but a 2005 study from the American Society for Microbiology and The Soap and Detergent Association show that although 91 percent of adults say they always wash their hands after using restrooms, but only 83 percent were observed doing so. Only 42 percent of Americans said they washed their hands after petting a dog or cat and only 32 percent washed their hands after coughing or sneezing. Hand washing is so low tech it doesn't get the credit it deserves. The **Clean Hands, Healthy Bodies** program teaches this simple concept.



In addition, eleven newly recruited volunteers received training to present this program in January.

## Family Life

- “Increasingly, people who are single are living their lives fully. Those who have the resources to do so are buying homes, traveling the world, and pursuing their passions. Their lives are meaningful- and yes, they are happy,” writes researcher Bella De Paulo of the University of California. Achieving this in a couple’s culture is no easy task.

The seminar, **Living Single in a Couples World**, discussed current research regarding beliefs about singleness and strategies for dealing with the challenges of singlehood. Milly Kaiser, University of Illinois Extension family life educator conducted the seminar for volunteers who will be teaching the program for other groups.

- Through the collaborative effort of Illinois Children’s Mental Health Partnership, Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, Illinois State Board of Education and University of Illinois Extension, an awareness presentation has been developed to introduce the important aspects of **Social and Emotional Learning** (SEL) to school professionals.

PreK-5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers in the **Bethalto school district** participated. Participants were assisted in understanding the need for SEL, they explored SEL learning standards, recognized the benefits of incorporating SEL into the school, and identified what the school is already doing that promotes SEL and how to strengthen those efforts.

## Improving the Management of Family Resources

- Dow falls, Dow rebounds, Dow suffers record losses: Dow hits you in the pocket book. The volatile market has people working or retired asking the question: what should I do with my money?

**Savings and Investing in Turbulent Times**, a teleconference with campus-based professors and extension educators helped to answer questions regarding what to do with your money in light of the current financial markets. David Sinow, clinical professor of finance at University of Illinois will address how

today's economic situation affects different types of investors. Paul McNamara, professor of consumer economics at University of Illinois addressed lessons we can derive from behavioral economics and previous market history. Extension educators discussed sound investment and risk management strategies, including diversification, dollar cost averaging, and rebalancing.

- IRAs, 401 (k) s and other retirement plans are great tools for accumulating money for retirement. But what are the rules for getting your money out of them? University of Illinois Extension Educator Karen Chan addresses these questions in ***Who Gets the Money?*** for fifteen volunteers who will be teaching additional groups.

The workshop explained the various rules for taking distributions from tax-deferred retirement savings plans for those younger than 59 1/2, those between 59 ½ and 70 ½, and those who have reached the important age of 70 ½. Participants learned how distributions are taxed and how to avoid additional penalties. Chan also gave tips on rolling over money from one account to another, even if you're already taking annual distributions. She explained what happens to the money when you're gone and what rules apply if you inherit your spouse's IRA.

## 4-H Youth Development

### Expansion of 4-H

- **Explore the Outdoors** 4-H workshop involved sixteen youth and parents sampling entomology, forestry, wildlife and natural resources project areas. Held at the Watershed Nature Center in Edwardsville, 4-H members learned how to tell the age of trees, worm habitats, wildlife tracks in the snow and wildlife herds (deer, elk, moose etc.) in the winter time, and how much food they need to survive the winter weather.

### Leadership Skills

- Seven youth and one 4-H parent/leader from Madison County recently attended the **2009 Illinois 4-H Junior Leadership Conference** held near Carlinville. They joined approximately 65 youth from across the state to improve their leadership and presentation skills and highlight learning opportunities they can bring back to their local 4-H clubs.

Junior high age youth representing 20 counties attended workshops covering the topics of club communications; parliamentary procedure; Illinois 4-H history; healthy lifestyles; animal emergency care; wind power; and intercultural programs. Youth really enjoyed the Wind Power Experience, made friends from other parts of the state, and had an overall rewarding experience. They also enjoyed and learned first aid for animals.



L to R - Amy Raymond, Emily Abbott, and Devan Kaufman; Alhambra Morning Glories 4-H Club, Sarah Link, Town & Country 4-H Club, Danielle Kirsch, Frick, Pin Oak Progressors 4-H Club, and Laurie Raymond, 4-H leader/parent, Alhambra Morning Glories 4-H Club  
Not pictured is Kailynne Cruthis, Hooves Paws & Claws 4-H Club.

- 4-Hers from twenty-two counties in Illinois recently experienced the **role of a legislator in the Illinois House of Representatives**. Prior to the conference they researched the topics of six mock bills and came prepared to debate as though it were a bill presented in the state legislature. During the conference participants increased their persuasive speaking skills during a workshop.

Claire Geiger of Grant Prairie 4-H club and Krista Kramer of Town & Country 4-H club were a part of the 49 4-Hers who recently participated in the two-day **Great 4-H Debate Conference** in our state capital in Springfield.



Three of the six bills were passed during this mock session—including a bill that would require community service for a teen to graduate from high school and one that would require high school graduation to receive or maintain a driver's license. The third bill that passed, "Teen graduated license behind the wheel practice time to receive a license will be reduced," was amended actually to increase the behind the wheel hours currently required by the state.

- We're pleased to announce that **Franklin Elementary School, Belleville; Lewis and Clark Elementary, Wood River; and Parkside Primary School, Bethalto** have been selected as **2009 Illinois State Schools of Character**. Illinois State School of Character awards recognize schools or districts that demonstrate an outstanding character education initiative that yields positive results in student behavior, school climate and academic performance. These three Illinois State School of Character winners exemplify the Eleven Principles of Effective Character Development and have been forwarded to the National Schools of Character competition sponsored by Character Education Partnership.

Illinois State Schools of Character winners and aspiring schools will be honored by University of Illinois Extension at the Illinois Leadership Conference on June 10 in Champaign. For more information about the Illinois State Schools of Character visit the University of Illinois Extension Character Development website at: [web.extension.uiuc.edu/character/](http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/character/).

- Twenty youth and parents enjoyed a lock in at Scott Air Force Base on a recent holiday weekend. This extended period of time provided an opportunity for further planning of the upcoming Holiday Walk event as well as recreational activities.

### After School Programming

- **4-H Teens Reaching for Success** after school program youth have been learning leadership and teambuilding skills as they have welcomed new members and have taken on a new challenge. Youth have engaged in a variety of activities to strengthen their acting skills in preparation for a spring performance. Additional youth have also learned science concepts through hands-on exploration of the Space Geology curriculum, which is a part of the Wonderwise Women in Science Learning Series.

**Orange areas are one of four program areas of focus for University of Illinois Extension. Blue is the identified issue for Madison-St. Clair unit within the program area. Black describes the programmatic activity conducted within the two-month period.**