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ILLINOIS EXTENSION COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

University of Illinois Extension provides practical education you can trust to help people, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future. Based in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Extension is the statewide outreach program of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.



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A Message from the Chancellor

The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign is an economic engine and a driver of innovation, deeply rooted in the Illinois prairie and engaged statewide, from Cook County to Cairo. Illinois Extension brings the

University to your doorstep. Extension educators live and work alongside you in every county, allowing the university to support local leaders, businesses, farmers, and residents to address grand challenges and everyday problems with practical, research-based solutions. As a youth, my own 4-H experience inspired a rewarding career in agricultural research and higher education. Today, it's an honor to lead this great public university and deepen its commitment to serve the people of Illinois.

Robert J. Jones Chancellor, University of Illinois





A Note from the County Director

Greetings from University of Illinois Extension serving Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Stark Counties. As another year comes to a close, I would like to thank our dedicated volunteers and many community partners who

support our mission to deliver robust and relevant programming to the people of our region.

Master Gardeners and Master Naturalist volunteers, together with our expert staff, deliver substantive horticulture programs that impact anyone who wants to learn – children, adults, disabled people, and senior citizens. Our agriculture and natural resources programs are rooted in Extension history and we are pleased to bring relevant topics to the region.

Our 4-H Adult Leaders are the backbone of our youth development program. They assist our staff with providing youth with experiential learning that supports career exploration, science, visual arts, agriculture engagement, and many other opportunities.

Our Extension unit is actively involved in supporting communities and organizations wishing to solve a problem or address an issue, such as disaster preparedness, creating a business incubator, and becoming an entrepreneurial community.

Our nutrition and wellness program promotes healthy lifestyle and public health practices on topics of chronic disease management, food safety and preservation, and overall physical wellness.

Thank you for being a part of our Extension family! Best, Jenny Garner, County Director

Jenny James

Nutrition and Wellness Programs

Kristin Bogdonas delivers health education programs that address chronic disease prevention and management, healthy lifestyles, food safety and food preservation. 2019 program highlights include:

I on Diabetes: Healthy Steps

Kristin received a City of Rock Island Gaming Grant for a 12-month diabetes program/support group for Watch Hill Tower residents. She provided research-based information to help participants manage their diabetes and prevent future complications of the disease. Selfmanagement is key to long-term success and this program was designed to foster the skills necessary to make that happen.

Each monthly meetup included a recipe demonstration and taste-test, a nutrition/wellness topic with hands-on activities, group discussion, goal-setting, and follow-up.

Results: 100% of the participants that completed the program developed new behaviors such as switching to no-sugar added beverages, eating smaller portion sizes, using the Plate Method for carbohydrate control, increasing consumption of non-starchy vegetables, reading nutrition facts labels and preparing food with less salt and fat.

Successes: Participants reported a reduction in A1C, including one from 7.2 to 5.6 and another from 9.5 to 8.2. Participants lost weight with one reporting a 30 lb. weight loss and an 18 point BMI (Body Mass Index) reduction from 49.7 to 31.5.

I finally understand why diabetes was so common in my family. This class saved my life and changed the way I look at food. "HEALTHY STEPS" PARTICIPANT



Kristin Bogdonas leading the Healthy Steps diabetes support group at Watch Hill Tower in Rock Island, IL.



Kristin Bogdonas has led 15 district-wide ABCs of School Nutrition trainings (pictures from Sherrard, IL training.)

ABCs of School Nutrition

ABCs of School Nutrition is a multi-year, grant-funded program that brought \$4.5 million to Extension from the Illinois State Board of Education to provide continuing education/training to school nutrition professionals across Illinois.

Kristin Bogdonas has provided 15 district-wide trainings to schools in Henry, LaSalle, Mercer, Rock Island, and Stark counties on a variety of topics, including behavioral economics, food waste reduction strategies, production records, fruit and vegetable promotion techniques, food safety, reducing sodium in meals, and student-staff rapport. Trainings are designed to increase students' consumption of new food offerings and reduce food waste overall. Most recently, Kristin coordinated a 6hour Summer Learning Institute in Sherrard, Illinois, with representation from Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Stark county schools. Tayler Wheatley, SNAP-Ed educator, also assisted in leading that training.

School Food Waste

Kristin coordinated the tray waste study which took place at Stark County Elementary School with audits each month from November 2018 to May 2019. This was part of ICE grant-funded research with Melissa Prescott, assistant professor of school/childhood foods and nutrition at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Following the study, Kristin presented a breakout session on tray waste studies at the Illinois School Nutrition Association conference on June 26, in Oakbrook, Illinois. Best practices, a new toolkit, and baseline data from the ICE grant were shared. She also led participants through a mock tray waste audit.

Locally, Kristin presented three sessions on food waste at the 2019 Quad City Youth Conference, discussing food rescue strategies and volunteer opportunities with high school students from across the area.



SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION (SNAP-EDUCATION)

SNAP-Education works with Illinois families in need to make the healthier choice an easier choice where they eat, shop, live, play and learn. Through classes and workshops, and by collaborating with community partners to adopt research-based solutions to encourage healthier nutrition and activity choices, SNAP-Education positively impacts the families and communities we serve.

Serving Local Families

21%

Adults



9,987 Total SNAP-Education Participants



C

79%

Youth



RACE OF PARTICIPANTS

/hite (4,371)

- **3**4% Black (2,502)
- 7% American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (544)

Our Community Partners





Throughout the school year, SNAP-Ed community workers educate middle and high school students with the Teen Cuisine curriculum. It provides a foundation for the students to make healthy choices as they move into adulthood. The lessons encourage students to choose healthy foods, explain food safety, and teach them how to read and make a healthy recipe in class.

Healthy Food Pantry Initiative

Extension Educator, Tayler Wheatley's objective is to change policies, systems, and the environment to ensure that healthy options are available to SNAP-eligible audiences.

In 2019, a large focus of Tayler's work has been to increase the health of food pantries. She worked with local food pantry coordinators and volunteers to increase the amount of healthy foods available and develop ways to encourage guests to choose the more nutritious food items. Tayler uses the Nutrition Environment Food Pantry Assessment Tool to help food pantries in these goals. By providing information on preparation/cooking and easy to make recipes, the pantry guests are more likely to choose healthy items and to feel confident that they can prepare the items when they get them home. You can hear more about this project on the WOC 1420 AM Extension Spotlight podcast online at https://go.illinois.edu/ HealthyFoodPantry



SNAP-Ed Educator Tayler Wheatley also helps train school lunch staff on the ABCs of School Nutrition program.



Get recipes and ideas from Illinois Extension's Eat Move Save website: eat-move-save.extension.illinois.edu/eat/recipes

Teaching Others to Learn to Grow

2019 marked the 48th anniversary of the Illinois Master Gardener program. With over 3,000 members, Illinois Master Gardeners dedicated 2,309,348 volunteer hours — a value of over \$46 million to the state! Our unit has 110 active Master Gardeners and 30 Master Naturalist volunteers. They provide a variety of educational programs for our region. Under the guidance of Tracy Jo Mulliken, program coordinator, they plan horticulture classes, workshops, and seminars; plant and maintaining community display and education gardens; operate a horticulture hotline to answer gardening questions; offer seasonal school outreach lessons; and more.

Master Gardener & Master Naturalist Volunteers



Volunteers

140

5,500 Volunteer Hours

1,062 Continuing Education Hours

2019 State Master Gardener Conference held in Moline

In 2019, over 300 Illinois Master Gardeners traveled to Rock Island County to attend their state conference. Planning and coordinating such an event takes many hands and our local Master Gardener volunteers stepped up to create a great one!



The conference offered numerous educational sessions, tours to see local attractions and Master Gardener projects, as well as the annual awards banquet honoring exceptional Master Gardener volunteers and

projects. The 2019 Outstanding Master Gardener awardwinners from our unit included: Linda Clewell of Moline, Deb Durnal-Corso of Andalusia, Deb O'Brien of Port Byron, Gail Pickering of Neponset, and Steve Swisher of Davenport. The award was established to honor the best of Illinois Master Gardeners.

Extending Horticultural Knowledge in Many Formats



Martha Smith, horticulture educator, is a requested speaker for many events locally and across the state.

Whether it's landscape aesthetics, sustainable practices, food production, pollinators, or one of the myriad of agriculture topics, Illinois Extension has the educational resources people need.

Martha Smith, horticulture educator, shares her 28 years of experience through a wide range of education, programs, training, and research. She is part of the Illinois Extension state horticulture team which produces gardening websites, seasonal webinars, and a YouTube channel to make horticultural information easily accessible to everyone.

Martha's focus is on both home and commercial horticulture. She arranges and teaches Master Gardener classes, provides continuing education and advanced training for our volunteers, plans and implements seasonal educational events for the home gardener, and assists with other horticulture requests.

Martha is on the planning committee for the Bi-State Conservation Action Network (BI-CAN). Their mission is to build a viable network by bring together conservation groups in the region. Martha is also an ISA-Certified Arborist, American Conifer Association and Illinois Green Industry member.

In addition to horticulture, Martha works with the Illinois Extension commercial agriculture team to bring workshops and trainings to our area, such as the pesticide safety education programs, industrial hemp workshops, small farms program, Local Foods webinar series, and others.

Watershed Outreach Program Offers Best Practices & Resources

Haley Haverback-Gruber serves the unit as a Watershed Outreach Associate. She provides science-based educational programs on the best practices for keeping water clean and local watersheds healthy, as outlined in the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy.

In 2019, Haley was part of a team that received an Interdisciplinary Collaboration with Extension (ICE) grant from the College of ACES. She teamed up with the Illinois -Indiana Sea Grant, Illinois Extension, and ACES agricultural communications staff to investigate how people in Illinois care for their lawns. From that research, they developed, piloted, and assessed a natural lawn care communications campaign in three communities, including Rock Island County.



Participants review edge of field practices to reduce nitrogen runoff at a workshop in August.

Edgy Conversation

In August 2019, Illinois Extension and the Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District collaborated with regional experts to hold a nitrogen loss reduction workshop and field day for farmers and landowners. Through classroom and interactive field tours, participants were able to see working examples of conservation practices in action and learn more about methods that can be applied on the edge of fields to capture nutrients before they enter our rivers and streams.

Mill Creek Watershed

In response to landowner concerns, Haley worked with the Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District to host a stakeholder meeting of the Mill Creek Watershed. Residents of the watershed had expressed extreme concern over stream conditions. Stakeholders ranked and prioritized resource concerns, formed a new Mill Creek Watershed Planning Steering Committee, and applied for a grant to strategize a work plan to achieve water resource goals.



Industrial Hemp Workshops

The signing of the Illinois hemp bill provided opportunities for growing, processing, and distribution of hemp for fiber, grain, and CBD. This versatile cash crop has the potential to empower small farmers, revitalize farming communities, and offer opportunities for entrepreneurial business start-ups. In response to legalizing hemp production in Illinois, and the requested need for research-based information, our unit held hemp production workshops in Moline and Wyoming, Illinois, with 144 participants. They were organized by our horticulture educator, Martha Smith, and led by Extension Commercial Ag Educator Phillip Alberti who brought in additional experts.

Mercer County Ag Literacy Program

Illinois Extension, with funding support from the Mercer County Farm Bureau, the Mercer County Soil and Water Conservation District, and local business, brings agriculture to life for hundreds of youth and families. Extension Program Coordinator Teresa Kirwan shares agriculture lessons through school outreach and community events, like Farm in the Park, safety day camps, and Dr. Seuss Day. She also helps organize the Summer Ag Institute for teachers.



Through community events and school visits, the Mercer County Ag Education program shares lessons on the important role agriculture plays in our everyday lives.

Rural Quality of Life Indicators Project

Community and Economic Development Educator Russell Medley worked with a multi-disciplinary team of Extension professionals from Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, and Nebraska to apply for a grant to examine the connection between economic development and health. Funded through the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD), the study, called the Rural Quality of Life Indicators Project, began in January 2019. The focus of the grant was to develop and pilot an instrument that not only scores a community or region on various "Quality of Life Indicators," but goes further to recommend projects/ programs/activities to improve the score on each indicator, tied directly to the community in question.

These recommendations may include Extension programs, capital improvement projects, or other programs that would achieve the desired result of increasing local quality of life and enhancing the community's "readiness" for economic development. Medley authored the grant proposal and served as Principal Investigator (PI) for the project. The final grant report, including a project summary and project deliverables, was submitted to NCRCRD on October 30, 2019.

Quad Cities Health and Human Services Value Project

In 2019, Medley began working with Iowa State Extension, local private sector funders, and key stakeholders among regional health and human service providers to develop a process to examine the economic impact of the health and human services sector on the regional economy. The collaboration arose because of complaints from the business community about duplication of services among the health and human services sector, and from a lack of understanding and recognition that health and human service providers bring not only critical services to the community, but also have a monetary value that impacts business development and the regional economy. As part of the research team, Medley is assisting in the development of a list of key informants to interview, a list of questions for key informants, and a communications and messaging plan.

Quad Cities Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD)

In the spring of 2019, with flooding becoming more severe in the Quad Cities region, the community turned to COAD for help. They activated their committees to work on donations, volunteers, animals, and long-term recovery. Russell Medley worked with COAD leadership to develop new planning documents for their standing committees. He developed plans using best practices from around the United States.

Medley will work with Extension colleagues to facilitate a full disaster exercise to assess the effectiveness of the COAD plan. The full framework for the new COAD organizational plan is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2020.



Students from Dr. Bev Wilson's Small Town Planning class gathered input from the Viola community on what to do with village-owned parcels of land.

Village of Viola Downtown Plan

The Village of Viola was seeking assistance with the redevelopment of some village-owned parcels of land located in the community's downtown. Russell Medley took their request to the University of Illinois' Department of Urban and Regional Planning. He connected with Dr. Beverly Wilson who took up the project for his Small Town Planning class. From January through April 2019, Illinois students worked with Viola to develop a plan to revitalize the village-owned properties. Medley coordinated site visits for the class, and organized a community open house where students presented alternative development scenarios and asked residents for input. A final document, "Village of Viola Downtown Plan", was presented to the village trustees in April 2019.

The Viola Downtown Project received the 2019 American Planning Association – Illinois Chapter Student Project Award. The awards ceremony was held on September 25, 2019, in Evanston, Illinois.

4-H Members Build Leadership Skills

4-H Educator Jennifer Peterson and 4-H program coordinators, Tracy Fowler-Pestle and Teresa Kirwan, help provide 4-H members with a wide variety of opportunities to grow their citizenship, leadership, and life skills.

Here are some 2019 highlights:

4-H Teen Teachers

23 4-H Teen Teachers were trained to lead a variety of 4-H curriculum projects as part of the 4-H Ag Ambassadors Club. They took extended livestock judging classes, created ag education activity stations, and shared agriculture lessons at events, including the Mercer and Rock Island County fairs, Farm in the Park events in Aledo and Galva, and at the Pee-Wee Shows at the Stark County Fair.

4-H Digital Ambassadors

In the spring of 2019, 4-H Digital Ambassadors Club members were trained in curriculum to teach digital/ computer skills to older adults. The goal is to have teens use their skills to help older adults navigate today's increasingly digital world. The 4-H Digital Ambassadors offer a variety of workshops to community agencies, senior centers, and volunteers. Funding for computers and curriculum was provided by a grant from Microsoft.

4-H Academy at Western Illinois University in Moline

70 youth got to spend the day exploring science, space, art, and engineering at hands-on workshops during the 4-H Academy on February 23, 2019. A highlight of the day was the Putnam Museum's Discovery Dome planetarium that simulates space age technology — giving them an "out of this world" experience!

4-H Ag Careers Camp

In June 2019, 40 teens took part in the 4-H Agriculture Careers Camp at Black Hawk College East in Galva, Illinois. They got to meet with industry professionals, tour the college, attend workshops, and explore a variety of careers and fields of study.

4-H Juntos

Juntos 4-H unites community partners to provide Latino students in 8th-12th grades and their parents with knowledge, skills, and resources to prevent youth from dropping out, and to encourage families to work together to gain access to college and trades. In 2019, 15 families attended a series of programs that included five different workshops, outside presenters, and college visits.

Serving Youth in Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Stark Counties

Wherever you live, 4-H is there. Whoever you are, 4-H is the place where you belong and are part of the club, where you serve in the world where you live, where you act on matters important to you, and where you learn to accomplish the dreams you strive to achieve. Illinois 4-H empowers and prepares youth for success — for today, tomorrow, and a lifetime.

Program Reach



1.7 % Suburb & Cities over 50,000



Professor Drew Cotton leads a session on animal nutrition during the 4-H Agriculture Careers Camp at Black Hawk College East in Galva, Illinois.

4-H Members Pledge their Hands to Service!

In the 4-H pledge, youth are tasked with offering their "hands to larger service," and being the driving forces in the betterment of their communities. 4-H clubs give members opportunities to participate in group service projects, and members are also encouraged to find individual service opportunities in their communities.

As usual, our 4-H youth took this task to heart. Clubs from all four counties were involved in community service. Many clubs held canned food drives, created special holiday food baskets for needy families, and made treats for first responders. Others packed holiday boxes for less fortunate children. Even animals benefitted from service efforts when 4-H members volunteered to walk dogs at shelters.

Members also volunteered their time playing BINGO with residents at senior centers, helped clean and repair buildings, and served food at numerous banquets and ceremonies. The shooting sports club in Stark County spent their Memorial Day honoring fallen soldiers by placing wreaths at gravesites.

A couple of individuals went above and beyond, and were recognized for their efforts. Katelynn Allen of Stark County organized a pet food drive for the ARK animal shelter, where she volunteers. She was awarded the Excel Award in Community Service and was named one of Stark County's All Star Helpers.

Mariah Conaway of Mercer County did so much community service that she was recognized at a national level. She received the President's Volunteer Service Award for her numerous hours of community service. The award, including a certificate from the President, was presented during her 4-H club's achievement program in November.



4-H youth are using their skills and knowledge to make a positive impact on those around them. They represent the future of our communities, and the future is bright!

4-H Members Serving Their Communities!



Stark County Century Clovers clean/repair Wy-Hi Community Center



Kewanee King Pins delivered treats to Kewanee First Responders



Cambridge Champs put together Thanksgiving food baskets



Atkinson Boosters held a canned food drive for local pantries



Stark County Century Clovers played BINGO with seniors





Professional Development and Workforce Preparedness

The Henry/Stark Health Department requires that their homecare assistants attain professional development each year to maintain employment. They requested information on chronic disease prevention and management, and how to make healthy substitutions when cooking and preparing meals. Illinois Extension Nutrition and Wellness Educator Kristin Bogdonas and SNAP-Ed Educator Tayler Wheatley were able to provide this training to 85 home health aides in September 2019.



Illinois Extension educators led a Home Healthcare Provider training in September for the Henry/Stark County Health Department.

Local Government Education

Each year, elected and appointed local government officials and administrators from across the state improve their knowledge and skills through professional development opportunities provided by Illinois Extension. Russell Medley, community and economic development educator, works with his statewide colleagues to plan and market these monthly webinars. Over the past year, the webinars have reached over 1,500 participants through live and recorded sessions. Topics included: state and federal legislative updates, developing a creative economy, Illinois minimum wage law, Census 2020, and succession planning for businesses.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION WEBINAR SERIES

View Local Government Education webinars: web.extension.illinois.edu/lge

Advanced Soil Health Training

Over the last several years, soil health has become a buzz term among many Illinois farmers. But what is soil health? The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) defines it as the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. Cornell University adds that a healthy soil can be used productively without adversely affecting its future productivity, the ecosystem, or the environment. Viewing soils as a living ecosystem reflects a shift in the way we manage our agricultural systems. Agricultural management practices change the physical (% sand, silt, and clay; bulk density; percent organic matter), chemical (pH, N, P, K, micronutrients, cation exchange capacity), and biological properties that affect soil function.

The use of cover crops, reduced tillage, and improved nutrient management can improve soil functionality. However, the transition into this complex system is accompanied by a set of production management changes, which can be challenging to navigate. Fortunately, a training program was developed to guide this process. Developed by the American Farmland Trust in 2015, Advanced Soil Health Training educates farmers, advisors, and conservation practitioners on soil health principles and the management changes required to transition into this system. This intensive training model provides six, two-day sessions over 18 months to a cohort of trainees. The next round of soil health training will be offered in Northwestern Illinois in May 2020 led by Illinois Extension. If you are interested in soil health training, contact Haley Haverback-Gruber at hmh2@illinois.edu or (309) 932-3447.



Illinois agricultural professionals received Advanced Soil Health Training to build their knowledge of the practices and principles that improve soil health.



Financial Information

University of Illinois Extension is a three-way funding partnership among the State of Illinois, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the county boards in Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Stark. Our SNAP-Ed programs are funded by a federal grant from the USDA. These partnerships bring hundreds of thousands of programming dollars into our four counties, matching local contributions with state, national, and federal support.

Many local business, foundations, and individuals provide additional support by donating through our local foundations, including to the Henry County 4-H Foundation, the Mercer County Extension & 4-H Foundation, and the Rock Island County Extension & 4-H Education Foundation, as well as through our local Extension Council, and through the Illinois 4-H Foundation. These resources are part of the local donation income that helps to sustain our programs. In addition, the unit receives a wide array of local programming grants each year (\$48,452.97 in 2019). All of these sources are vital in helping us fulfill our educational mission.



2019 Grants:

\$13,824 Rural Quality of Life Grant for Community and Economic Development project

\$11,474.97 4-H Digital Ambassadors Grant

\$9,454 U.S. Department of Defense for 4-H military partnership

\$5,000 The Moline Foundation for 4-H Juntos* \$3,700 City of Rock Island Gaming Grant for Healthy Steps diabetes program.

\$2,000 CHS for 4-H ag careers

\$1,000 Tyson Foods for 4-H ag education

\$1,000 Exelon for demonstration gardens*

\$1,000 IL 4-H Foundation, Club Innovation Grant In-kind, fresh fruit and vegetables from Hy-Vee stores in Milan/Rock Island for National School Lunch Taste Tests.

In-kind, 4-H Shooting Sports equipment and ammunition from the National Rifle Association

*Grants given through the Rock Island County Extension & 4-H Education Foundation

COUNTY DIRECTOR

Jenny Garner

EDUCATORS

Kristin Bogdonas, Nutrition & Wellness

Russell Medley, Community & Economic Development

Jennifer Peterson, 4-H

Martha Smith, Horticulture

Tayler Wheatley, SNAP-Ed

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Haley Haverback-Gruber, Water Quality

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Cover Photos: (top left) Haley Haverback, watershed outreach associate, and Master Naturalist volunteers teach natural resource lessons at ECO-Camp each spring and fall; (top right) 4-H teens assist young 4-H Cloverbuds with livestock showing at the Stark County Fair; (center) Ribbon-cutting at our Mercer County office, which relocated to Viola in the fall of 2019; (bottom left) Industrial hemp workshops, like this one at Western Illinois University in Moline, were a popular topic in agriculture in 2019; (bottom right) Kristin Bogdonas, nutrition and wellness educator, brings diabetes prevention programs to the local community.

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 in any program, please contact the county Extension office. The Illinois Nutrition Education Program is funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture by the Director, Cooperative Extension Service, and University of Illinois.

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