



# Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Winter2024

*Bond.  
Clinton.  
Jefferson.  
Marion.  
Washington.*



### 03. Trainings and Certifications for Producers

The future of our food supply relies on the use of practices that boost production and capacity.

### 04. Gardening & Grocery Planning

While families try to manage their finances with increasing costs, some changes are easier to make than others.

### 06. Nutrition Impacted by Food Insecurity

A Food insecurity rate of 12.4% in Marion County indicates a decrease in access to food that is culturally relevant and nutritionally robust.

PHOTO CREDIT: MAARTEN DECKERSFOR UNSPLASH



# Winter2024

Dear Community,

As we navigate the winter months, a season of reflection and transformation, we find inspiration in the strength of our shared mission. At Extension, we steadfastly believe in the potential of Illinois and its communities.

In this report, discover the impact of our collective efforts in addressing key issues across Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington counties. From supporting strong and resilient youth and families to growing a prosperous economy, sustaining natural resources, maintaining a safe food supply, and maximizing physical and emotional health for all, our programs stand as beacons of positive change.

Our focus on the “grand challenges” of our time guides our actions. We define annual priorities that respond to evolving needs while ensuring meaningful progress. This dynamic strategy allows us to stay true to our mission while serving communities throughout Extension.

As we unveil the accomplishments of this quarter, we invite you to engage with the stories. These narratives are a testament to the dedication of our team. We are not just problem-solvers; we are facilitators of positive change, and your partnership is integral to our success.

We invite you to explore upcoming opportunities like Grocery Planning, Master Naturalist training and others listed on our website [extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw/events](https://extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw/events). Find events that resonate with your interests and values and get involved.

Together, let us embrace the winter season as a time of growth, reflection, and shared purpose.

Many thanks,

*Jordee Koehler*



## Educational Partnerships Benefit Communities

Thriving youth are the core of healthy, robust communities. Illinois Extension's youth development model focuses on social competence, academic success, career development, and community connection. A partnership with the local Regional Office of Education enables Illinois Extension Educators to take research based educational programs directly to teachers and students. In the fall, Educators led two sessions at a local school in-service day, hosted three breakout sessions at a ROE conference serving four of our five counties, and provided student education at a career day hosted by Kaskaskia College.

Our Youth Development and Finance teams are collaborating with Marion, Clinton, & Washington Counties Career & Technical Education System on the Welcome to the Real World simulation. In addition, a Robotics professional development opportunity is being held at Odin school district in February. This is just the first professional development offering in 2024, with a full menu of options currently being finalized to serve different districts' needs.

# MARION County

*A strong sense of community brings people together to develop shared goals, support one another in times of need and growth, and work together for the good of the whole.*

*When strong networks of peers and organizations support youth and families, even the most vulnerable community members feel they belong and are valued.*

*SNAP-Ed programs are one way that Marion County Extension works to support the local community. Since September 1, local SNAP-Ed staff have led 76 educational programs in Marion County. This includes a combination of school visits, food pantry booths, WIC office classes and other adult programs.*

*Krystal Pruden as SNAP-Ed staff serving Marion County knows that research shows a strong link between food insecurity, poor health, and even poor academic outcomes for children. Extension connects youth, volunteers, and partners to work together to*

*address food insecurity in locally relevant ways.*

*Over 33% of Marion County residents are eligible for SNAP benefits. We are partnering with local schools, community organizations, and food pantries to provide direct and indirect nutrition education, promote environmental changes, and encourage an active lifestyle. This helps encourage those receiving SNAP benefits to make healthy lifestyle choices.*

*Partner organizations are vital to community education. In addition to 4-H volunteers, Illinois Extension also partners with community groups, organizations and schools.*

*We also work to reach the community through the help of Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers. When people volunteer for a local issue, they see themselves as part of the solution.*

*The survival of our planet depends on the quality of our water, land, energy, and air. These shared resources must be managed through sustainable practices that support ecological*

*In 2023 Marion County Master Gardeners donated 100 hours and Marion County Master Naturalists donated over 195 hours to community projects.*

*balance. In a changing climate, Illinois Extension helps Illinois residents make informed choices on stewardship of these natural resources to ensure sustainable environment and ecosystems supporting healthy living and climate resilient communities.*

*You can learn more about University of Illinois Extension upcoming programs online at [go.illinois.edu/bcjmw](http://go.illinois.edu/bcjmw), [facebook.com/bcjmwu23](https://www.facebook.com/bcjmwu23), email at [uie-bcjmw@illinois.edu](mailto:uie-bcjmw@illinois.edu) or by calling us at 618-327-8881.*

## Trainings and Certifications for Producers

There is no off season in the Agriculture and Horticulture industries.

The future of our food supply relies on the use of practices that boost production and capacity. Growers at all levels benefit from practical, efficient, and sustainable approaches to cultivating produce, crops, and livestock that feed their families, communities, and the world.

Commercial fruit and vegetable growers face a lot of uncertainties. One thing is certain: University of Illinois Extension has the current research to help make those important production decisions. Every year **Southern Illinois Fruit and Vegetable School** brings informative, practical, and up-to-date research-based information to address the challenges of growing fruit and vegetables commercially in Southern Illinois and Missouri. On February 7, industry experts shared current trends in insect and disease management and various other production-related topics with roughly 100 producers at the Doubletree Meeting & Event Center in Mt. Vernon.

Also on February 7, **Commercial Livestock Manager Training** was held at the Clinton County Extension Office in Breese. The Livestock Management Facilities Act requires facilities designed for 300 or more animal units to have at least one employee certified in environmentally aware manure management techniques.

A range of topics related to the operation, management, and utiliza-



tion of livestock waste and waste facilities were covered. Additionally, the latest regulations, best management practices, and research for manure-related issues were discussed. Online training and testing

are available all year and follow the same format as the in-person workshops. Online training includes nine modules of 10- to 20-minute videos that can be viewed at your own pace.

**Leadership Workshop**

**Friday, February 16**  
**3 - 7 p.m.**  
*dinner provided*

### Thriving Youth

The core of healthy, robust communities

Environmental education is a high priority for University of Illinois Extension. Through multiple partnerships and collaborations, our youth development and ag and natural resources teams are addressing the needs

of environmental education in our local communities. A few ways we are working to do this is by bringing the signature Master Naturalist program paired with a Junior Master Naturalist to our multi-county unit this year. The National Environmen-

## Financial Wellbeing

Resources for all ages and life stages help individuals build and protect wealth



>> *continued from page 4*

tal Education Foundation states that environmental education leads to greater academic achievement, develops problem-solving confidence, fosters interest in STEM careers, and enhances creativity

Our Youth Development and Finance teams are collaborating on the Welcome to the Real World simulation. In the July 2022 FINRA Foundation national financial capability study, it was reported that young people with high levels of financial literacy are more likely to save and plan for retirement and less likely to use expensive borrowing methods. The simulation will not only provide approximately 200 8th graders a chance to experience what it would be like to live a month on the salary

of their chosen profession but also give their teachers access to free, research-based career and money management curriculum. Providing quality financial literacy materials and instruction is one of the Bond, Clinton, Marion, Jefferson, and Washington Extension offices' high priorities.

Research shows that on average 58% of young people ages 15-25 are not active in community affairs. To encourage youth to be more active in our communities the 4-H team is planning a 5-county leadership event for our older members. The day is orchestrated to show youth the importance of being a leader and to practice their communication and interpersonal skills.

Have you noticed price increases recently? According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, expenses have been rising at a higher rate than income. While families try to manage their finances with increasing costs, some changes are easier to make than others. After cutting back on luxuries, even basic necessities may be more difficult to afford. The USDA food price index has shown a dramatic increase (rising 9.9% in 2022) in the cost of buying food.

*Gardening and Grocery Planning* is an educational program we provide to help community members with strategies to improve financial well-being with a focus on food. Planning meals and grocery costs can help to lower expenses and cut down on impulse buying. In addition, starting a container garden can benefit your budget by supplementing your shopping list and be a fruitful hobby that satisfies your taste buds. This program will be offered on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. at Kaskaskia College Trenton Education Center and Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. at Kaskaskia College Greenville Education Center.

Registration is open now at [go.illinois.edu/GardeningandGroceries](http://go.illinois.edu/GardeningandGroceries). You can find more helpful financial education tools online at [go.illinois.edu/money](http://go.illinois.edu/money).



## Enhancing and Preserving Natural Resources

Master Naturalist and Jr. Master Naturalist registration opens April 1

## Food Insecurity Impacts Nutrition Choices

Food insecurity is not just about hunger. It also indicates a decrease in access to food that is culturally relevant and nutritionally robust. According to the USDA there is a strong link between food insecurity, poor physical and mental health, and even poor academic outcomes for children. SNAP-Ed works to decrease these disparities by offering adult programming through local partnerships. Currently, SNAP-Ed is working with Youthbuild, Lifeboat Alliance,

adult living communities, and area foodbanks to educate those who are food insecure.

The SNAP-Ed program generates up to 135 million in future benefits for the people of Illinois. Illinoisans receive anywhere from \$5.36 and \$9.34 in return for each dollar spent helping Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participants make health choices through Eat. Move. Save education programs.

% Food Insecure (2021)		
	All Ages	Youth
Illinois	9.50%	11.30%
Bond	11%	12%
Clinton	7.00%	5.50%
Jefferson	11.80%	15.20%
Marion	12.40%	14.90%
Washington	6.80%	5.70%

The image shows the percentage of food insecurity in our local area. The counties in red have higher percentages than the state.

Recently a food pantry client came to an Eat.Move.Save Booth at a local food pantry. This client had been to the doctor and was told to cut out processed grains and replace them with whole grains. She was at a loss on how to know the difference between the two. Thankfully, she was comfortable enough to ask, “How do I know the difference?” Our community outreach worker presenting the booth took the client to the bread table and showed her how to read the food label to find out what is and is not a whole grain product. They talked about all the different kinds of grain products and how to read the ingredient list. Our client was happy to be empowered to make better choices for her health.

# Upcoming Events



**at a glance** here's what's next

## February

- 17** 4-H Beef Weigh-In, Greenville
- 17** State 4-H Horse Judging Contest, Galva
- 19** Speaking for Illinois 4-H
- 19** Master Gardener/Master Naturalist Office Hours
- 20** Water Bath Canning, Centralia
- 22** Disparities in Maternal Care, webinar
- 22** Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training & Testing, Mt. Vernon
- 24** 4-H Electricity Workshop, Trenton

## March

- 5** 4-H Floral Workshop, Breese
- 7** 4-H Public Speaking Contest, Kaskaskia College
- 8-9** Midwest Herb Show, Mt. Vernon
- 12** Pesticide Applicator Testing, Breese
- 14** Pesticide Applicator Testing, Nashville
- 20** Gardening and Grocery Planning, Trenton
- 22** 4-H Macrame Workshop, Breese
- 23** Volunteer Hullabaloo, Carlyle
- 28** 4-H Stained Glass Workshop, Nashville

[See our full calendar online](#)

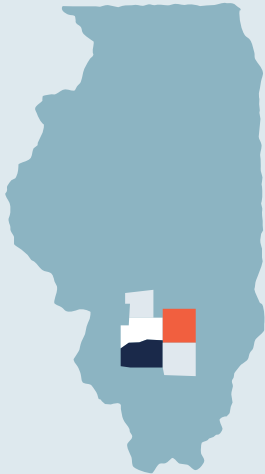
Find details on these programs, plus new events being added and online opportunities at [extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw/events](https://extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw/events).

## BUSINESS HOURS

Monday through Friday  
8 AM - 12 PM & 1 - 4:30 PM



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## Find us online.



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College of Agriculture, Consumer & Environmental Sciences

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