

Dear Valued Stakeholder:

Extension plays a vital role in building a strong community by providing services that help solve problems, develop skills, and create a better future for local residents and youth. From reliable information to help businesses weather the economic effect of COVID-19 to activities to help families stay healthy in body and spirit, Illinois Extension remains a trusted source to address the most pressing issues in the state of Illinois relating to food, health, environment, community, and economy.

It is my pleasure to present this brief impact report of the programs and events offered to the residents of Franklin, Jackson, Perry, Randolph and Williamson Counties during this past month.

*Lynn Heins, Extension Director
Serving Franklin, Jackson, Perry, Randolph & Williamson Counties*

785

Total
Contacts

17

Total Number
of Programs &
Events

Predatory insects used as biological control in high tunnels

Releasing insects into high tunnels filled with fresh produce may seem counterproductive, but that's exactly what is being done through a research study with University of Illinois Specialty Crops Entomologist Kacie Athey. The project was highlighted at a recent twilight meeting at the Dixon Springs Agricultural Center. Spider mites, aphids, and thrips are some of the most common pests that can attack high tunnel plants. For most growers, infestations are treated through insecticides or other chemical control methods.



Through the study, predatory insects like lady beetles, Orius, or predatory mites are released into the high tunnels as biological controls. The beneficial insects act as natural enemies that feed upon harmful pests that infest high tunnels. Sticky traps are also placed throughout the high tunnel to capture and assess the insect communities within high tunnels. The study is made possible through an Extension Collaboration grant, and it is also being conducted at the Student Sustainability Farm on the University of Illinois campus in Champaign. The preliminary data will help determine if the biological controls help to control the pests within high tunnel systems.

Perry, Jackson, and Randolph County youth place in 4-H shows

Hard work, quality care, and dedication paid off as our 4-H members from Perry, Jackson, and Randolph Counties showcased their animals at this year's Perry County Fair. Following the 2020 summer of virtual livestock exhibits, participants were anxious for the return of in-person shows. The events provided an opportunity for youth to display sportsmanship and exude confidence as they showed the "best of the best" during the annual livestock and animal shows.

4-H youth who raise beef, swine, sheep, goats, rabbits, and poultry for their annual projects had the opportunity to participate in the livestock auction. Participants receive the full proceeds from the sale of their livestock, and this was a record-breaking year. Local businesses, families, and other individuals made this year's auction a success, with over \$50,000 going directly to local youth.



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Brain health meets plant care in recent workshop

There's a connection between health and gardening, and the Marion Senior Citizens Center residents learned that during a collaborative program with Family Life Educator Robin Ridgely and Horticulture Educator Austin Little. During the "Geraniums and Craniums workshop," residents practiced adaptive and safe gardening methods while participating in brain fitness activities. Residents left with more information on brain health as well as their own ornamental container garden to take home and enjoy.

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

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University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in programming, contact your registration office.
Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time for meeting your access needs.