



## Issues facing food production

*Illinois needs a 70% increase in production to meet the global demand for food by 2050. Food production accounts for 6% of Illinois jobs.*

Four years ago, a group of concerned community members noted high rates of food insecurity in Lee County. To respond to this local need, residents created the Dixon Community Garden. Within one year of the project starting, 92% of available gardening beds were rented by individuals, families, and organizations wanting a place to grow their own fresh food or grow food for donation.

By 2021, as yearly expansions provided more gardening opportunities, the Dixon Community Gardens now consists of three gardens with a growing capacity of 42 garden beds. Some garden beds are reserved to incorporate pollinator pockets, creating pollinator habitats to help increase number of pollinators, establish perennial crops (asparagus, rhubarb and strawberries), and rent out for food donations to local organizations.

- Since 2018, 96 beds of food have been grown in these gardens.
- Lee County Master Gardeners and KSB Hospital use six beds as donation gardens.
- Lee County Master Gardeners and Dixon Community Gardens created a community space for growing, learning, and natural exploration.



Just want to thank you and the other members of the garden committee that planted the rhubarb and strawberries. Today I took some of the strawberries for our lunch, and they were absolutely delicious! I had never really gone through a strawberry patch before, and I was so surprised to find those beautiful bright red strawberries there! And the rhubarb was new for me, too, as I had never made pies with it before, but I was able to make two strawberry rhubarb pies this spring. It has quickly become my new favorite! So, thanks for all that thinking ahead you did a couple years ago planting those garden beds for us to enjoy.

COMMUNITY MEMBER



## Agriculture & Natural Resources Activities



180  
Educational Sessions



4,857  
Participants



7,956  
ANR Program Attendance