

Macon County Extension Council Meeting

November 8, 2021

The November 8, 2021 Unit 17 Extension Council meeting was held via Zoom.

The November 8, 2021 meeting was called to order by Doug Harlan at 6:33 p.m.

Those present at meeting: Sonya Anthony, Brett Brown, Angi Carter, Kathi Drozs, Morgan Drozs, Karen Halicki, Merry Lanker, Megan Murphy, Tayisha Nelson, Kailee Steinkamp, and David White.

Staff present at meeting: Doug Harlan, Doug Gucker, Jamie Boas, Caitlin Melendorf, and Sarah Vogel.

There were no public attendees or comments.

Minutes from the September 2021 Extension Council were presented. There were no corrections. A motion was made by Sonya Anthony to approve the minutes and was seconded by David White. Motion passed.

David White asked about the Farm Progress Show. Doug Harlan provided information to the Council that attendance and revenue were both down to the lowest level since 2009.

Doug Harlan went over the fiscal report. He went over the DeWitt, Macon, Piatt unit income budget. He reported that 60% of the County Board money has been received. Doug also went over the individual counties Income and Expense reports. He asked the Council if there were any questions or comments on the report. There were none.

Personnel Update: Doug Harlan informed Council that Kendra Wallace had been hired to fill the 4-H EPC for Piatt County position on November 1, 2021. Doug reported that the Youth Development Educator position in Macon County is still open. The SNAP-ED Unit Educator position will be posted/advertised just before Christmas and close in January.

Doug Harlan talked about areas in which the Unit is directing programs. Megan Murphy asked about the programs that go into the schools. Programs presented to the school are created with the needs of the school taken into consideration. Teachers are instrumental in providing information to help determine the best program options for the school. While Covid-19 continues to limit some program options, program options being utilized presently involve public health, health education, water quality, solar powered cars, and career/college readiness with an intern who stayed on. Merry Lanker teaches art in Macon County and offered her services for programming. Her services will be utilized when a Youth Development Educator for Macon County is hired. No other programs were brought up or identified.

Program Highlight: Sarah Vogel reported that there have been multiple opportunities for training. Pruning for evergreen trees, terrarium workshops were well attended and participants had great feedback. Master Gardner Training is back to an in-person format. Master Gardner volunteers are serving as room hosts and mentors to new members. 153 flower bouquets were given to assisted living centers and over 4000 pounds of food was distributed to food banks in DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties. Community Gardens were implemented and maintained by Master Garden Volunteers.

Program Updates: Doug Gucker provided a report on 2021 harvest, September reached 50% harvest mark but October had limited progress, due to the wet weather. Many calls received on leases, proper harvest, storage moisture levels for soybeans, custom harvest rates, soil testing and soil fertility rates. 28 farmers received training on the Food Safety Modernization Act, FSMA, Produce Safety Rule. Farmers that sell fresh produce to consumers are required to provide training to workers and follow certain food safety guidelines.

DeWitt/Piatt 4-H Youth Development, Jamie Boas reported on National 4-H week. The theme was Find Your Spark. Activities included Cloverbud coloring contest, photo and drawing contest, and a window display contest for clubs. Thousands of people were reached through Facebook with these events. Piatt County has new clubs, Mid-States Marksmen is an Air Rifle Club and Mansfield Cloverbuds with a focus on agriculture.

Horticulture: Sarah Vogel reported that Master Gardeners in the area received awards for Outstanding Master Gardener, Teamwork and Sustained Excellence. Garden tours will resume in an effort to gain new volunteers and promote the program.

Nutrition and Wellness: Caitlin Mellendorf reported that she is offering monthly classes on food protection. This training is required for food service professionals working in restaurants, school cafeterias, hospitals, and other food locations. Caitlin is also involved in a grant through the Health Equity Achieved Together (HEAT) Project to develop a deer donation program in 12 counties, to include DeWitt, Macon and Piatt.

With no other Council business Sonya Anthony made a motion to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Merry Lanker. The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Next meeting will be held via Zoom on March 14, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.