Agriculture & Natural Resources program area overview
Five Facts about Extension’s Ag & Natural Resources programs

Have questions about Extension? Think you know it well? We might surprise you. Check out these fast facts about the ways Extension’s Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) programs work in Illinois.

We work on behalf of ALL Illinois residents
Extension programs provide public value to all Illinois residents. We support a strong Illinois economy by providing research, analysis, and education aimed at strengthening the foundational agricultural sector in the state. Our programs support food safety for consumers by providing essential training for producers, and contribute to a healthy environment through research, education, and other services.

We play well with others
Educators and specialists in the Agriculture and Natural Resources program area partner with Illinois state agencies, University researchers, local organizations, industry groups, schools, local governments, and national networks to assure a coordinated approach to state and local issues.

We serve urban & rural areas
Our programs directly reach people in urban and rural areas throughout the state. Programs in Chicago, Bloomington, and other cities aim at expanding local food production, while Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs provide education and services to expand home and community natural amenities, providing ecosystem services, food donations, school-based demonstrations, and more. Programs on field crop production, livestock, specialty crops, and local foods reach commercial producers of all scales in rural, urban, and transition areas.

We provide essential services for commercial agriculture
Extension provides field crop, specialty crop, and livestock producers with unbiased, evidence-based information on production and marketing. Producers can directly access Extension information, analysis of current conditions, research, and services through outreach events, training sessions, direct expert assistance, and web-based resources. In addition, Extension research findings are distributed to producers through Certified Crop Advisors. Educators also serve as approved agricultural experts to provide information on good farming practices for insurance purposes. As evolving conditions require adapted practices, and as critical issues emerge, Extension offers evidence-based information, analysis, and research that producers can use.

We provide direct education and much more
Extension is known for its high quality classes and training sessions, and that same high quality is evident in the full array of information channels and resources Extension provides. Agriculture and Natural Resources educators provide web resources, online training, answer desks, expert assistance, applied research, data collection, volunteer-led community services, and coordination with expert networks to meet audience needs.
## Selected program information

### Food Safety Modernization Act Grower Training

Provides produce farmers with training on identifying and preventing microbial risk and develop a farm food safety plan to help them comply with a new federal law that aims to prevent or minimize the likelihood of food-borne disease.

- **96 participants with an estimated $12.5 million in annual sales** were trained in food safety requirements in 2018

### Pesticide Safety Education Program

Provides training on the safe and effective use of pesticides reduces unintended pesticide effects on water quality, health, and pesticide resistance.

- **35,968 pesticide safety certifications** issued in the last 3 years

### Certified Livestock Management program

Supports air and water quality by training livestock producers in environmentally sustainable and safe management of their facilities.

- **925 livestock management certifications representing an estimated 1.5 million animal units** issued in the last 3 years

### Crop Management Conferences (CMC)

Present information and updates to support field crop producers and other professionals in making evidence-based decisions for the crops they produce or advise on.

- **2019 CMC participants farm or advise on an estimated 8.2 million acres. 97% of recurrent participants report taking action based on conference information**

### Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy support

Includes research, education, and implementation to help producers manage environmental effects of agricultural production.

- Collaborative contacts with **59 agency, nonprofit, and industry watershed stakeholder groups** to further water quality outreach

### Master Gardeners

Support residents in cities through community gardens and expanded capacity for community natural assets and green infrastructure, as well as promoting resident wellbeing through home garden education. **Master Naturalists** are trained to share natural resource information with their communities, and contribute to environmental conservation and restoration activities.

- **3,632 Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists donated 302,487 hours** in 2019

### Local Foods and Small Farms programs

Help expand consumer access to safe, local food in food deserts and underserved areas through the support of community gardens, farmers markets, and other forms of urban agriculture. **Master Urban Farmer training program** provides training in all aspects of urban food production to expand capacity in Chicago.

- **669 programs reached 26,780 people in rural counties; 748 programs reached 49,470 people in the Chicago area and other urban counties**

### Smart Meter outreach

Informs rural and low-resource audiences about ways to save energy and money by using smart meters in their homes.

- **ANR staff contributed to 35 research projects**, provided over **13,000 expert assistance services**, and provided analyses for over **4,500 plant and soil samples**

## For more information

For information on these and other Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources programs, contact Dennis Bowman, Interim Assistant Dean for Agriculture and Natural Resources and ANR Program Leader, ndbowman@illinois.edu ph: 217 244 0851