

## 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.



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## Five Facts about Extension ANR: program information

### 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.

**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.

**Certified Livestock Management program** supports air and water quality by training livestock producers in environmentally sustainable and safe management of their facilities.

**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.

**Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy support** includes research, education, and implementation to help producers manage environmental effects of agricultural production.

**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.

**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.

**Smart Meter outreach** informs rural and low-resource audiences about ways to save energy and money by using smart meters in their homes.

### 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](mailto:ndbowman@illinois.edu) ph: 217 244 0851

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**

Photos by Amanda Christensen