



# Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## Third Quarter 2021 Impact Report Jo Daviess, Stephenson, and Winnebago Counties



## Extending Knowledge; Changing Lives

Illinois Extension offers practical education to help people, businesses and communities solve problems, develop skills and build a better future.



### A Note from our Director:

Summer is always a busy time for our staff as people in the surrounding communities are enjoying the weather and participating in local outdoor events. These events are prime opportunities for staff and educators to reach out and make connections. From public presentations to working informational booths, staff have been educating, helping and providing support where needed. They have done an excellent job of reaching community members in several different ways—whether it be through the SNAP-Ed program, 4-H, Master Gardeners, or through one of our five talented Educators.

Of course, this would not be possible without our faithful volunteers. It takes many hours of dedicated work to pull off a lot of our summer events, especially the 4-H shows. Thank you for your time and commitment.

We're moving forward with planning late fall and winter educational programming with lots of new and exciting content.

Bye for now,

*Margaret*







## SNAP-Education

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Community Workers Barb Curry, Rita Gillette, Terre McGee and Linda Ricker continue offering educational programming to limited income households in Stephenson and Winnebago Counties. They also reach youth in local schools and at after-school programs.

SNAP-Education Program Coordinator Gina Adams continues expanding community outreach by incorporating existing and new partners in educating consumers on healthy food choices.



### Youth Classes:

- 200 in-person
- 21 virtual



### Impacted:

- 1,993 youth
- 501 adults



### During the third quarter, SNAP has worked with:

- 10 K-12 Schools
- 8 Emergency Food Sites
- 4 Summer Food Sites
- 2 Stores/Markets
- 2 Churches
- 11 Agencies/Community Centers



### Adult Classes:

- 186 in-person
- 36 virtual



## Environmental Stewardship

**2021 Electronics Recycling Collection** - In August, the University of Illinois Extension in partnership with the City of Freeport and the Stephenson County Health Department offered an Electronics Recycling Collection to the residents of Stephenson County.



156 cars went through the collection filling 3 semi-trucks with electronics



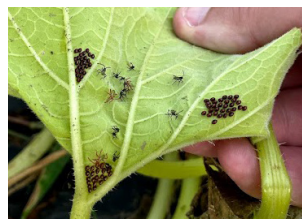
25 volunteers from multiple organizations helped unload electronics and stack on pallets



## Local Foods and Small Farms

### Expert Assistance in Summer

With a focus on helping commercial and noncommercial fruit and vegetable growers, Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator Grant McCarty continued to provide answers throughout the growing season. Questions included drought



impact, late ripening of tomatoes, cucurbit diseases and insects, Cabbage worms, managing Japanese beetles, and many others. For commercial growers, McCarty visited farms and farmers markets as needed to provide technical support through emails, phone, and zoom calls occurred too. Many of the noncommercial growers he worked with had previously attended Grant's other webinar series.

While the core of expert assistance occurs during the summer, McCarty continues answering questions and providing support into the fall and winter.

*"The expert assistance I provide in the summer helps growers take immediate action in better managing a problem they are encountering. These consultations further help our Unit understand the issues that are being faced in our community which can lead to more impactful educational programming, outreach, and even future research."*

-Grant McCarty

Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator

**Falling Into the Autumn Vegetable Garden Program** - Like in 2020, McCarty offered this webinar in September. This program focuses on tasks that noncommercial growers can still do in their garden in Fall and Winter. He plots these out in simple tasks of "now", "next", and "soon" so that growers can have a better idea of what still needs to be done and what could be done if they want to continue gardening in November and December. These tasks include growing garlic, planting cover crops, creating a compost pile, using season extension, among many others.



47 individuals registered

## Commercial Agriculture and Environmental & Energy Stewardship

Over the last two years, a local resident turned low production crop land into productive pasture with collaborative help from Commercial Agriculture Educator Phillip Alberti and Environmental & Energy Stewardship Educator Jay Solomon. The project started in mid-2018 and has made significant progress in the last year. What started as odd-shaped end rows and sloped, eroding field borders has grown into a lush pasture with minimal runoff and non-existent gullies that were concerning at the beginning of the project.

Together, Phillip and Jay assessed the site and made recommendations for plant species, seeding strategies, and a



Before



After

grazing management plan including fencing/water placement. A herd of mini Herefords are now on the pasture and future work will include refining the rotational grazing with mobile fencing.



## 4-H and Youth Development

With summer in full swing, the 4-H and Youth Program Coordinators have been helping youth shine in all three counties! Most of the projects for 4-H were shown and judged in July and early August. Shortly after the 4-H Shows finished, the Illinois State Fair started and local youth exhibited their projects there as well. Record books and club paperwork were due in August. September continued to stay busy for everyone as a new 4-H year began and planning of award banquets to honor the achievements of youth from the past year.



**Volunteers Inducted into the Illinois Hall of Fame** - Three volunteers—one from each county were named to the Illinois 4-H Hall of Fame for their leadership and mentoring roles. These volunteers were honored for their dedication to the 4-H program. 71 individuals were recognized during a virtual ceremony in August. Award Winners were:

Jo Daviess: Valerie Brudi  
Stephenson: Kristi Krahmer  
Winnebago: Neva Ramos



There are 60 different project selections for youth to choose from to exhibit at the 4-H Show

### Number of Youth in 4-H Shows:

Jo Daviess: 100 youth exhibited  
Stephenson: 214 youth exhibited  
Winnebago: 203 youth exhibited



### Entries Registered for 4-H Shows:

Jo Daviess: 460 projects  
Stephenson: 1,435 projects  
Winnebago: 971 projects



### Number selected to compete at Illinois State Fair:

Jo Daviess: 18 entries  
Stephenson: 46 entries  
Winnebago: 39 entries



## Horticulture

**Master Gardeners** - The Master Gardener Helpline has stayed busy in all three counties. Master Gardeners from each county volunteer their time and knowledge to help solve garden issues with research-based information. Calls are logged to identify trends in disease issues or pest populations.



94 calls/emails were recorded in July, August and September

### Most popular questions:

- How drought impacts trees
- Insect identification
- Vegetable/Garden concerns
- How to prune shrubs



Stephenson County Master Gardeners kept a busy schedule in third quarter between having information tables set up at various events like the Stephenson County Fair and the Voices Garden Walk as well as presenting to Zion Church members and the Lake Summerset Garden Club. Volunteers also kept the area demonstration gardens in shape and made sure that signage and brochures were in place.

**Plant A Row/Growing Together Initiative** - Winnebago County Master Gardeners along with the SNAP-Ed Department have been working with garden growers in the community to plant an extra row of vegetables and donate the excess at designated drop-off locations around Winnebago County.



Over 14,663 pounds of fresh, locally-grown produce has been donated



## Illinois Nutrition Education

### Student Garden is a Bounty of Success

With the help of SNAP-ED Educator Carol Erickson, the West Middle School in Rockford, IL was able to create a school garden in a nearby parking lot. Over the summer, students and their families along with the local YMCA's youth leadership camp, helped tend to the garden. Vegetables harvested were donated to local church pop-up pantrys. To date, they have donated over 215 pounds of food. The teachers are already creating future lesson plans to incorporate the garden more.



**SNAP Comes to Rockford Midtown Market** - For the past two years, shoppers at the weekly farmers market have been asking about using SNAP benefits. This year, they discovered that they could use their SNAP and the Pandemic EBT card that many Rockford Public School students received, because of the joint efforts of Erickson and Reverend Mike Thomas, chairperson of the organizing committee. While applying for the SNAP benefits, Erickson and Reverend Thomas also applied to Link Up Illinois for the produce incentive program. Shoppers were thrilled when they found out they could use their SNAP/EBT cards, as well as get double bucks to buy fresh produce. This was a win for the shopper and a win for the market vendors!



## Nutrition and Wellness

**I made that!** - Youth learn the importance of healthy lifestyles through these fun, interactive educational kits. In July, youth learned the importance of staying hydrated while staying active. September was National Whole Grains Month and youth learned that whole grains are an important part of a healthy and well-balanced diet. Developing healthy habits early on will help to foster a healthy lifestyle into adulthood.



35 kits were ordered for the July "I Made That" program



15 kits were ordered for the September "I Made That" program

### USDA Training for Local School Nutritional Professionals

Three trainings were held within Stephenson and Winnebago counties in early August to help School Nutrition Professionals understand and implement dietary guidelines recommended by the USDA. This free professional development training aids school staff in creating nutritious, safe and enjoyable meals for students.



3 in-person sessions



29 individuals attended

**Harvesting a Rainbow of Tomatoes** - In this virtual workshop held on Aug. 26, Nutrition and Wellness Educator Diane Reinhold discussed what to do with all of those beautiful tomatoes—whether they be red, yellow, or green in color. Reinhold explained why tomatoes are a healthy addition to the diet, along with buying, storing and preparing various tomatoes during this session.



31 individuals attended

## University of Illinois Extension office locations

### Jo Daviess County

204 Vine St.  
PO Box 600  
Elizabeth, IL 61028  
815-858-2273



**website:**  
[go.illinois.edu/jsw](http://go.illinois.edu/jsw)

### Stephenson County

Highland Community College  
Building R,  
2998 W. Pearl City Rd.  
Freeport, IL 61032  
815-235-4125



**Facebook:**  
University of Illinois Extension -  
Jo Daviess/Stephenson/Winnebago County

### Winnebago County

1040 North Second St.  
Rockford, IL 61107  
815-986-4357



**email:**  
[uie-jsw@illinois.edu](mailto:uie-jsw@illinois.edu)

### SNAP-Ed Rockford Office

850 N. Church St.  
Rockford, IL 61103  
779-423-0982



**YouTube:**  
[go.illinois.edu/JSWYouTube](http://go.illinois.edu/JSWYouTube)

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University of Illinois, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Local Extension Councils Cooperating.  
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in any program, please contact the county Extension Office.  
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