A Message from the Chancellor

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is an economic engine and a driver of innovation, deeply rooted in the Illinois prairie and engaged statewide, from Cook County to Cairo. Illinois Extension brings the university to your doorstep. Extension educators live and work alongside you in every county, allowing the university to support local leaders, businesses, farmers, and residents to address grand challenges and everyday problems with practical, research-based solutions. As a youth, my own 4-H experience inspired a rewarding career in agricultural research and higher education. Today, it’s an honor to lead this great public university and deepen its commitment to serve the people of Illinois.

Robert J. Jones
Chancellor, University of Illinois

A Note From the County Director

Extension’s Goal Remains the Same: Inspire, Challenge, and Motivate

I believe that we, as Extension workers, are obligated to inspire, challenge, and motivate others! I believe it is my role as county director to challenge our staff to create and deliver programs for our communities that are significant, have an impact on people's lives, and that will inspire our participants to say, “Do it again!”

It is an honor for me to share how unique our staff is and to provide you with a sampling of their talents and moments of significance. I am a firm believer that the programming success stories highlighted in this report are a direct reflection of our staff’s shared passion and purpose to serve others, even during the pandemic of 2020. We have all faced and embraced the unexpected this past year and, in doing so, I believe that we have all learned a great deal from the experience and are better prepared for our next life lesson.

I am proud to serve as the County Director in Calhoun, Cass, Greene, Morgan, and Scott counties and I ask that you take a moment to enjoy the highlights of this report.

Aaron Dufelmeier
County Extension Director
Working Together to Provide Remote Learning Opportunities

When early signs of COVID-19 arrived in Illinois, families and businesses across the state were forced to confront a reality unlike anything they could have imagined. With schools transitioning to virtual learning, parents were hungry for information about managing the physical and emotional health of their at-home learners. Families suddenly found themselves together at home more, where they explored new hobbies, such as gardening and food preservation. Farmers needed to navigate the numerous challenges facing both local and global food supply chains. Almost overnight, restaurants and retail stores had to rethink their business models or risk becoming irrelevant in a suddenly virtual world.

As the challenges mounted, the Illinois Extension network emerged as an effective method for creating and sharing timely, research-backed solutions to many of the most pressing issues we were grappling with.

As schools searched for ways to keep students engaged in remote learning, Extension educators worked collaboratively to create and present remote programs on topics of interest. When Winchester schools requested a program on weather, Educator Duane Friend used a website showing Earth’s winds in real time to engage eighth grade classes. Winds were shown at ground level and at multiple elevations above Earth, showing how high and low pressure systems work and what type of weather they bring.

There was a hurricane in the Caribbean Sea at the time of the presentation, providing an additional point of interest. Several handheld anemometers were loaned to the classes for students to examine wind speed outside the classroom.

I really enjoyed your presentation and so did the kids. We spent time on the website looking up all kinds of things. My students were very impressed and so was I.

CLASSROOM TEACHER
Extension Helps Restaurants Adjust to Shifting COVID-19 Restrictions

As local restaurants prepared to reopen in Illinois, Extension hosted a two-part webinar series, Scaling Up Illinois Restaurant Operations. In the first broadcast, Gretchen Ernst of Gordon Food Service discussed how supply and demand during the pandemic was affecting restaurant food and kitchen supplies. University of Illinois experts Jorden Brotherton, clinical assistant professor of hospitality management, and Carter Phillips, instructional chef and quantity food manager, provided menu analysis and recipe costing. Dustin Allen, chef at Edge in Peoria, shared his personal experience dealing with the impact of COVID-19 on his restaurant.

During the second session, Larry Lynch, senior vice president of the National Restaurant Association, provided state-specific restaurant re-opening guidance, including information on food safety, cleaning and sanitizing, employee health and hygiene, and social distancing. Brotherton returned to discuss safety and the guest experience, touching on topics like measuring the perception and effectiveness of safety procedures with a set of “fresh eyes,” enabling frontline staff to look for service failures, and putting safety practices on display. The final speaker was Tristan Popadziuk, chief operating officer of CxT Roasting Company, who stressed additional safety precautions and shared how he modified operations to enhance curbside and takeout orders, while using social media to boost online sales.

Watch the first webinar: https://go.illinois.edu/restaurant

Watch the second webinar: https://go.illinois.edu/restaurant2
4-H Adapts to a Virtual Platform

4-H youth development programs easily adapted to the needs of virtual classrooms in 2020. Health Rocks, which helps youth make healthy decisions about drug and alcohol use, in addition to teaching communication, relationship, and overall life skills, was provided to seventh and eighth grade students in Winchester and North Greene. Seventh graders at North Greene also participated in the Be Safe program, which creates environments that are physically and emotionally safe.

4-H Hall of Fame Honorees

Todd Burrus
Cass County

Jay Harris
Morgan County

State 4-H Scholarship and Award Winners

Katie White
Morgan County
Legacy of Leadership Scholarship
State Leadership Award

Anne Becker
Morgan County
Legacy of Leadership Scholarship
Key Award
LCP Award
Youth Leadership Team

Austin Dufelmeier
Morgan County
Legacy of Leadership Scholarship
State Leadership Award
Pandemic Changes, but Doesn’t Stop the Show

4-H members in Calhoun, Cass, Greene, Morgan, and Scott counties faced more than a few challenges this exhibit season, but they stepped up to meet them all. Cancellation of traditional fairs meant a change in the way projects were exhibited. Pictures and reports replaced face-to-face conversations with judges. Livestock, usually primped and pampered, remained at home on the farm. Videos were taken. There were 650 livestock videos judged, and more than 300 pictures and reports. To say we are proud is an understatement.

View the Virtual Fair results:
https://extension.illinois.edu/ccgms/4-h-calhoun-cass-greene-morgan-and-scott-counties

Thriving youth are the core of healthy, robust communities. Our mentorship-based youth development model applies a holistic development framework. It focuses on social competence, academic success, career development, and community connection. The 4-H club experience creates opportunities and environments for all youth to thrive — today and tomorrow.

Follow us on Facebook:
facebook.com/UofiExtensionCCGMS
Timber Seminar Helps Landowners Determine Value

A timber harvesting and taxes seminar was held in Carrollton on February 15, 2020. Extension State Forester Jay Hayek presented information for forest land owners on selling and marketing their timber, establishing a basis for tax purposes, and optimizing timber value.

The natural wonder of Illinois is more than just its beautiful scenery. The land provides recreation for residents and visitors, habitat for pollinators and wildlife, pastures for grazing livestock, fields for growing food, and the safe water that is essential for all living things. Threats to our land, air, and water can be managed with the identification, promotion, and adoption of environmentally-sustainable policies and practices.

Carefully developed green spaces and natural assets help youth and adults improve learning and enhance physical and mental wellness. Sound environmental and agricultural policies contribute to a sustainable and diverse environment, increase comfort, reduce government costs, and enhance property values.

Water, land, and air quality have significant implications for our survival. These shared resources must be managed though ecological balance and sustainable practices. Our future depends on our ability to effectively steward these resources for generations to come.

As a new timber land owner, realizing the need to have a forester evaluate the property and create a basis and a depletion figure is a huge advantage.

All the information was extremely helpful and informative. Pricing, contracts, and values all extremely valuable. Wish we had more time. It was great.

Insects and Cover Crops

Several cover crop and non-cover crop experimental plots are located across the region. As part of a two-year statewide study on cover crops and insects, Extension Educators Ken Johnson and Duane Friend obtained insect samples from the plots. These samples were delivered to Extension Entomologist Nick Seiter for identification and reporting. The data will add to a statewide report on insect populations in cover crops, seeking to determine the benefit and harm in order to provide insect scouting and termination timing for cover crops. The current recommendation is to terminate cover crops a week or two ahead of planting to avoid creating a "green bridge" for insects.

Read more on the Extension forestry website: https://extension.illinois.edu/forestry
Good Growing Gives Gardeners Answers for Healthier Plants

Good Growing is a multi-faceted media platform featuring print media, a blog, podcasts, videos, and webinars, making it a robust and modern source for Extension information. Nearly 700 subscribers receive a weekly email with links to that week’s blog post and podcast, as well as past articles that are relevant to the time of year. The onset of the pandemic created a surge in home gardening interest. Americans were buying seeds, plants, and equipment in record numbers. Subscriptions to the email newsletter grew an astonishing 417%. The Good Growing team recognized a need for more resources to be conveyed in new ways.

They increased their output, publishing 72 posts in 2020. Horticulture Educator Ken Johnson contributed 25 posts that were viewed 13,000 times. In total, the Good Growing blog had over 98,000 total page views last year.

In March, the team launched two new initiatives. Starting a Garden, a series of educational articles for beginning gardeners, took readers step-by-step through the entire process from planning through harvest. It also included articles outlining how to grow popular vegetable crops. In total, the 26 articles in this series were viewed over 16,000 times.

The Good Growing team embodies the very reason that Extension exists - to serve the communities across Illinois, whatever their needs.

In recognition of their accomplishments in 2020, the Good Growing team received a University of Illinois Extension Team Excellence Award.

The team also began a weekly Good Growing podcast, marking a whole new delivery method for Extension home gardening information. Extension educators or specialists were invited to talk about their area of expertise and to answer home gardening questions. The podcast’s RSS feed is linked to major platforms, such as iTunes, Google Podcast, and other third-party podcast apps, making it widely accessible (just ask your smart speaker to “play the Good Growing podcast.”). In 2020, the Good Growing team produced 38 episodes that have been played more than 4,700 times. In November, they added video, recording each podcast and uploading the videocasts to YouTube. Eight videos were produced in 2020 and have been viewed over 1,100 times.

The team’s efforts serve as a shining example of the impact achieved by creative and dedicated Extension educators during the pandemic.

This webinar was fantastic. It was very informative. I learned a great deal and plan to watch it again. I’ve paid for webinars that weren’t nearly as good as this one. I hope my tax dollars are going towards this program. It is worth every penny. Thank you!

GOOD GROWING WEBINAR PARTICIPANT

Check out these popular Good Growing videos!
• Growing Garlic: youtu.be/NwzuCqchqqQ
• Making Terrarium Ornaments: youtu.be/2-uuOwERDK0
• Making Ornamental Balls : youtu.be/wjENt9UexwM
Everyday Environment Webinar Series Provides Practical Ways to Enhance Our Natural Resources

To provide valuable environmental education throughout the pandemic, Duane Friend, energy and environmental stewardship educator, co-created Everyday Environment, a weekly environmental webinar series demonstrating small ways that people can have a positive impact on the environment. The webinars ran from April through June and drew 150 - 300 participants per session, ranging from local to international.

Webinar topics included:
- Explaining the Greenhouse Effect
- Coyotes
- Woodpeckers
- Pollinators
- Constructing a Farm Pond
- Nutrient Loss Reduction
- Stormwater Management

I have been watching for your webinar on YouTube. It was just an awesome program. I believe the Environmental Series is so far the best and most informative series that Extension has offered in some time. Thank you so much. Looking forward to the rest of the series.

EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENT VIEWER

As part of the Everyday Environment series, Duane Friend discussed Illinois’ vast prairies of the past and the need for prairie management, including guidelines for controlled burns.
SNAP-Ed Programming Goes Virtual

Over two million Illinois residents rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for food assistance, according to May 2020 totals from Illinois Department of Human Services, with a 14% spike in the latter half of the year associated with the effects of COVID-19. Issues with access to and affordability of healthy food options can perpetuate chronic illness. Healthy people and communities require safe, nutritious, and abundant food and the education to make every food choice and every food dollar count. The SNAP-Ed team continuously shares resources to increase food security in our communities and to provide families with relief during these challenging times.

Adult nutrition classes, combining nutrition education and food resource management principles, encourage families to make healthy food choices on a limited budget. In both Cass and Morgan counties, Community Workers Tina Miller and Becky Schafer made sure these resources stayed available to families during the pandemic. The virtual classes were very successful. Participants were eager to share with community workers the diet changes they adopted while staying at home. Morgan County also conducted virtual nutrition education for children.

Melinda Vortman, SNAP-Ed program coordinator, and Abby Rose, Extension educator, worked with local agencies to adopt practices supporting healthy environments. They provided healthy recipe cards for food pantries to distribute to clients, introduced more nutritious menu items to schools, and created attractive produce displays in schools and food pantries. Vortman and Rose also hosted meetings for Healthy Jacksonville Coalition's Food/Nutrition Workgroup via Zoom, allowing local agencies to actively address food insecurity during a time in which families faced financial challenges caused by the pandemic. The coalition’s work resulted in two food giveaways in Jacksonville.

**SNAP-Ed Community Partnerships**

- 10 K-12 Schools
- 5 Early Childhood
- 14 Agencies or Community Centers
- 5 Emergency Food Sites
FINANCIAL REPORT

REVENUES
$821,126

EXPENSES

- 54% Local
- 33% State
- 10% Federal
- 3% University
- 75% Personnel
- 25% Non-Personnel