Illinois Extension

University of Illinois Extension provides practical education you can trust to help people, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future. Based in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Extension is the statewide outreach program of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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

2020 was quite the year — a year of hardship, sacrifice, and change. Many people in our communities faced these challenges in very personal ways. While it has been an incredibly difficult year, I’d like to think there have been gains during this time, as well. Hardship can bring about perspective and growth in areas we didn’t anticipate. Many have enjoyed extra time with family, explored new creative endeavors, and found compassion in helping others. What silver linings have you experienced in 2020? I would ask you to join me in taking a moment to reflect on 2020, giving respect to our losses while also focusing on the positives the year brought us.

In this 2020 Impact Report, we highlight a few of the many programs and opportunities Extension staff have delivered to our community members. Staff have worked diligently to transition programs to new delivery methods and to expand our reach into new focus areas and communities.

There have been changes in facilities and personnel. The Collinsville and Waterloo offices both expanded into additional space at their current locations to accommodate our growing staff. A new office was added at the Jackie Joyner-Kersee Community Center. The unit welcomed a new county director, two new SNAP-Ed educators, and a new local foods and small farms educator.

While this report is a small sample of the programming and activities we offer through Extension serving Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties, I hope that you are inspired by the highlights we’ve mentioned. We enjoy sharing our efforts with you and appreciate your continued support. Thank you for being on this journey with us.

Amy Cope
County Extension Director
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County Extension Director

4-H Youth Development
Rachel Hazen, Extension Educator
Angie Abernathy, Extension Program Coordinator
Kelly Brandt, Extension Program Coordinator

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Nathan Johanning, Commercial Agriculture Educator
Grace Margherio, Local Foods & Small Farms Educator
Elizabeth Wahle, Specialty Crops Educator
Sarah Ruth, Horticulture & Natural Resources Extension Program Coordinator

Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program
Katrina Galati, Interim Extension Educator, EFNEP
Aretha Burns, Community Worker
Gestavia Peeples, Community Worker
Chastidy Wilson, Community Worker

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education
Joey Fonseca-Islas, Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed
Katrina Galati, Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed
Laquitsha Bejoile-Hayes, Extension Program Coordinator
Kaitlin Belovich, Extension Program Coordinator
Rima Abusaid, Community Worker
Bailey Allen, Community Worker
Julie Fulton, Community Worker
Maritza Lemke, Community Worker
Asia Walker, Community Worker

Office Support
Paige Brown, Waterloo
Karla Isaak, East St. Louis
Mary Kay Rahn, Waterloo
Patty Stanton, Collinsville
Extension Council 2020-21
The Extension Council is authorized by the University of Illinois Board of Trustees, in accordance with state law, to be actively involved in the operation of University of Illinois Extension.

**Madison County**
Chelsey Ammann
David Ammann
Claire Dorsey*
Megan Huelsmann
Adam Mestemacher
April Rottmann

**Monroe County**
Amy Kolweier
Brian Mueller
Janella Neary*
Raeleen Neary*
Emelie Nilges

**St. Clair County**
Wilbon Anthony
Gary Green
Kenya Leonard
Kayla Thessing
Dan Tiedemann

*Youth Member

**Extension State Advisory Council Member**
Brian Mueller, three-year term

**Extension Foundations**
Members of local foundations are dedicated to planning fundraising events to support Extension programming in each of the unit’s counties. Board members include:

**Madison County Extension Education Foundation**
Debbie Adamick
Jan Denby
Mary Hewlett
Amy Rogier
Rita Skau
Leon Uhe
Patty Uhe
Lynn Weis

**Monroe County Extension & 4-H Education Foundation**
Justin Knobloch
Jennifer Nobbe
George Obernagel
Susan Rick
Don Schrader
Kevin Schreder
Richard Woodcock

**St. Clair County Extension & Education Foundation**
Jerry Albrecht
Dave Hinton
Don Kaiser
Ann Morey
Winn Pardee
Edie Sadoval
Carolyn Sitzes

**Local Funders**
Horseradish Growers of Illinois
Illinois 4-H Foundation
Land O’Lakes
Madison County Association for Home and Community Education
Madison County Board
Madison County Extension Education Foundation
Madison County Farm Bureau
Monroe County 4-H Federation
Monroe County Association for Home and Community Education
Monroe County Board of Commissioners
Monroe County Extension and 4-H Education Foundation
Monroe County Farm Bureau
St. Clair County Extension and Education Foundation
St. Clair County Farm Bureau
Various individual contributors: financial and time
Recognition of Excellence

State Teamwork Award
Junior Master Gardener Camp, Monroe County

The State Master Gardener Teamwork Award recognizes Master Gardener projects that are impactful, innovative, and replicable statewide. The Junior Master Gardener Camp in Monroe County is dedicated to youth education. Master Gardeners and other community volunteers provide hands-on learning opportunities for youth, ages 8-13. Participants maintain a vegetable garden and learn about nutrition and ecology.

Outstanding State Master Gardener Award

The Outstanding State Master Gardener Award honors the best of Illinois Master Gardeners, those whose breadth and depth of involvement in the program is exemplary. Debbie Rathert is dedicated to helping others learn to grow. She educates homeowners on good home horticulture practices on the horticulture helpline and in a demonstration garden. Rathert is also a regular guest on “Let’s Talk Plants,” a WBGZ radio segment, where she provides garden tips to listeners. She enjoys mentoring and nurturing her fellow Master Gardeners.

4-H Hall of Fame

The 2020 Illinois 4-H Hall of Fame inductees have a track record of exemplary service to 4-H, or outstanding career and community achievements, and were nominated by University of Illinois Extension staff. The Illinois 4-H Foundation established the statewide Hall of Fame in 2004 to honor and celebrate extraordinary 4-H alumni, volunteers, and former 4-H staff. Each inductee receives a commemorative Hall of Fame medallion.
Lending a Helping Hand

4-H community service projects included food supplies for the House of Neighborly Service in Waterloo, sanitation bundles for assisted living centers, a “Blessings Box,” hats for the homeless, and clean-up efforts at the Bellefontaine House.

4-H Takes Positive Youth Development Virtual

4-H staff statewide designed and delivered a new suite of online experiences so youth could continue to thrive!

400+ Competitive events, fairs, and shows
200+ Programs

went completely virtual

Our 4-H Clubs remained resilient with more than:

903 Club Members
79 Clubs
107 Adult Volunteers
45 Youth Volunteers

No matter what is happening in the world, 4-H stands ready to innovate to meet the needs of today’s youth!

St. Clair County Teen Teachers

Governor French Academy in Belleville is home to a new group of 4-H Teen Teachers. Youth spent many hours preparing to teach topics that interest them, including public speaking, visual arts, gardening, theatre, cooking, and entrepreneurship. Teen Teachers create their own lesson plans and will deliver education to 70% of the students at this school.
Virtual Show Boasts Great Results

- 304 General Project Entries
- 340 Livestock Entries
- 71 Projects Advanced to the State Fair
- 50 State Fair Blue Ribbons Awarded
- 15 State Fair INSPIRE Awards
- 12 State Fair CHAMPION Awards
- 13 State Fair RESERVE Champion Awards
SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION

SNAP-Ed works with Illinois families in need to make the healthier choice an easier choice. Through classes, workshops and collaboration with community partners to adopt research-based solutions encouraging healthier nutrition and activity choices, SNAP-Ed positively affects families and communities.

In 2020, SNAP-Ed virtual education and resources:

- Addressed community partner needs by providing resources and collaboration opportunities
- Provided live, virtual classes families could join from their own phone, tablet, or computer
- Distributed print materials to families on topics such as recipes made with common pantry ingredients
- Increased reach via social media, text, and e-news with relevant nutrition and activity information
- Created a new community food resource map, Find Food Illinois, on the Eat. Move. Save. website

Since March, we worked with the St. Louis Area Food Bank and Restoration Church in Granite City to become a disaster relief mobile market site. Each month this fall, they served over 150 families. SNAP-Ed also helped at the market by adhering to social distancing guidelines and providing recipes to families. Kaitlin Belovich, SNAP-Ed unit educator

SNAP-Ed Community Partnerships

- 46 K-12 Schools
- 3 Stores or Markets
- 22 Agencies or Community Centers
- 17 Emergency Food Sites
- 16 Early Childhood

In a Time of Need

The SNAP-Ed team worked with the St. Louis Area Food Bank and Restoration Church in Granite City to become a Disaster Relief Mobile Market site. Due to massive layoffs at the local steel mill, there is a high rate of unemployment in Granite City. Restoration Church had a goal to feed 100 to 120 families in fall 2020. They collaborated with the Community Care Center to provide volunteers at each mobile market site event.

Glen-Ed Food Pantry Success

Joey Fonseca-Islas and Katrina Galati, SNAP-Ed educators, created the first-ever virtual professional development opportunity for food pantries. They delivered the one-hour program on client choice shopping style to volunteers and managers of the Glen-Ed Food Pantry in Glen Carbon. Participants took tests to gauge their knowledge at the beginning and end of the training. The marked increase in scores on the post-test confirmed the program’s success. To further assist with the transition to an open shopping style, the SNAP-Ed team installed promotional materials in the pantry, providing nutrition information and encouraging patrons to make healthy food choices.

We transitioned from a list-based client choice system behind a window to an open shopping model. Feedback from both clients and volunteers has been positive. It’s been a pleasure to see clients take joy in being able to shop for their own foods and we believe it strengthens our relationships with clients, boosts morale, and improves confidence in our services.

AMY POOS, GLEN-ED PANTRY DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
What’s in Your Pantry?
Aretha Burns, expanded food and nutrition education program community worker, offered the What’s in Your Pantry program via Facebook Live.

She prepared chicken corn chowder using ingredients from her own pantry. One viewer modified the recipe to accommodate what she had on hand, leaving out milk and substituting beef sausage for chicken. She said it was delicious!

My son and I have started cooking together. We have added color to our meals by using various vegetables. This also sparks conversation because I also talk to him about the different nutrients that come from various colors when eating our fruits and vegetables. Preparing meals has become nutritious, as well as educational.

TAMANTHA P.

Bridges of Hope
Community Worker Maritza Lemke delivered her first live, virtual Healthy Cents program to Hispanic families in 2020. Attracting interest in virtual programming can be difficult, but Lemke launched her meeting with great energy and enthusiasm and the participants were completely engaged in the 30-minute, Spanish-language presentation. At the end of the program, Lemke spent another 20 minutes in discussion with participants who had questions about MyPlate and strategies for getting their children to eat more vegetables at home. Overall, the program was a great success. Many families specifically asked for information about additional opportunities to participate in Lemke’s SNAP-Ed programming.

The Show Must Go On!
In 2020, SNAP-Ed pivoted from in-person to online programming with great success. Rima Abusaid, SNAP-Ed community worker, reached over 386 youth and adult participants via virtual programming. In the fall, the SNAP-Ed team began to develop youth and adult programming for the Cahokia School District.
Agriculture and Natural Resources
The healing power of plants. The healing power of food.
In 2020, many people turned to cultivating plants and enjoying nature as they spent more time closer to home. Home gardeners expanded their food production, and farmers – large and small – worked tirelessly to ensure a steady food supply during a time of uncertainty. Extension was there to help residents and agricultural producers surround themselves with thriving plants, get more out of their time in natural areas, and maximize their food production.

3,863
ANR Program Attendance

148
Master Gardener Volunteers

68
Master Naturalist Volunteers

21
Community Gardens
(includes gardens inactive due to COVID-19)

19,566
Pounds of Food Donated

925
Expert Consultations

235
Information Services Provided by Master Gardeners

Access to Statewide Programs

285
Webinar Sessions Accessible Anywhere

182
New Videos and Podcast Episodes

JJK FAN Innovation Center Programming
Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator Grace Margherio joined Extension in April. Her primary focus is programming at and our developing partnership with the Jackie Joyner-Kersee Food, Agriculture, and Nutrition Innovation Center in East St. Louis.

Margherio creates garden-based activities for small groups during youth day camps and afterschool programs. Lesson topics have included soils, garden planning, and seed dissection. Participants receive growing materials and instructions to take home.

The center’s raised garden beds are host to a variety of vegetables, including radishes, spinach, turnips, and mustard and collard greens. During harvest, youth were able to take produce and recipes home to share with their families.

Students and staff welcomed the fall season with Chef Tia and baked apples.
The 2020 Gateway Green Industry Conference, organized by Elizabeth Wahle, Extension educator, featured six breakout sessions with approved CEUs for professional development. Session topics included Illinois’ rarest trees, diagnosing tree ailments, alternate tools for woody invasive control, perennial stars, living carpets, and more. There were 225 attendees.

Agricultural Field Research
Extension hosted the Soil and Water Management webinar on February 20. Nathan Johanning, Extension educator, presented field research on cover crops and soil quality. Johanning’s cover crop trials examine different species and planting methods to build and benefit the soil, prevent erosion, and aid in pest management. Trials at the Baebler Educational Farm include commercial tomato and pepper production applications with a cover crop of cereal rye.

Johanning is also working with a team at the Southern Illinois University Belleville Research Center to solve common issues in commercial pumpkin production. In September, they hosted Pumpkin Field Day. Presentation topics included insects, disease, weeds, and pollination.

Master Gardener and Master Naturalist Volunteers
Our Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers act as a great resource for homeowners with gardening and wildlife questions. Sarah Ruth, agriculture and natural resources program coordinator, leads trainees through 60 hours of education. This year’s curriculum included both in-person and virtual lessons on topics including plant identification, soil, disease, ornithology, geology, and botany. Not only do these volunteers assist the public with their inquiries, they work at many local gardens in our area, as well.

Every year, our volunteers work together to recruit local residents for garden tours. A round of applause goes out to the team, who provided the 2020 Virtual Garden Tour. The video is available on YouTube.

The virtual tour and other videos can be found at go.illinois.edu/SmallFarmsLocalFoodsYouTube

Thank you so much for sharing all of your knowledge and thoughts about my landscaping issues. Your experience is very much appreciated.
HELP LINE CALLER

The 2020 Gateway Green Industry Conference has been hosted by University of Illinois Extension for 38 years.