A Message from the County Director

I am proud to serve as the county director for Illinois Extension, serving Adams, Brown, Hancock, Pike, and Schuyler counties. The education and programs we provide positively impact those we serve. Thank you to our staff, volunteers, partners, sponsors, and program participants for another great year. Please take a moment to review some of our highlights in our 2021 Impact Report.

In 2021, staff built upon lessons learned in 2020 and welcomed new opportunities to connect with audiences. We were thrilled to return to in-person programming across all program areas. In 2021, staff returned to the classroom to deliver Ag in the Classroom and SNAP-Ed lessons. We celebrated mastery of projects with in-person 4-H fairs in all our counties. 4-Hers continued to inspire us with their dedication to service projects. Master Gardeners logged 732 volunteer hours. Our small farms and local foods educator reached 959 people with direct education and 140 people with expert assistance.

Many new programs were ushered in for our youth in 2021. Adams County started a Junior Master Gardener Program, a STEM SPIN (SSpecial INterest) club, and an Archery SPIN club. 4-H members in Pike participated in new programming including photography and visual arts workshops.

Staff serving Adams, Brown, Hancock, Pike, and Schuyler counties remain committed to providing high quality education. Thank you for taking the time to read our 2021 Impact Report. We hope to see you at one of our programs in 2022!

Shelby Crow
County Extension Director
Think Global, Act Local

Illinois Extension embodies the land grant mission of University of Illinois, providing applied research and education to address societal grand challenges and local issues.

**Community**
Support Strong and Resilient Youth, Families, and Communities

- Connectedness and Inclusion
- Involvement and Leadership
- Thriving Youth

**Economy**
Grow a Prosperous Economy

- Economic Vitality
- Financial Wellbeing
- Workforce Preparedness/Advancement

**Environment**
Sustain Natural Resources in Home and Public Spaces

- Enhancing and Preserving Natural Resources
- Engagement with Home and Community Landscape

**Food**
Maintain a Safe and Accessible Food Supply

- Food Access
- Food Production
- Food Safety

**Health**
Maximize Physical and Emotional Health for All

- Chronic Disease Prevention and Management
- Social and Emotional Health
- Healthy and Safe Environments

Extension leaders meet with local stakeholders to define annual priorities that allow us to respond to evolving and emerging needs and make meaningful progress toward important long-term outcomes. This blend of long-range focus and local accountability is a powerful strategy that ensures we stay true to our mission as we serve communities across the state.
Horizons Food Pantry provides health wellness services

The University of Illinois Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) is committed to partnering with agencies in the emergency food area, such as food pantries, food banks, and mobile food markets. The SNAP-Ed program seeks to collaborate with agencies to provide technical assistance that ensures that clients who use emergency food services can maximize the services they receive in these agencies. We also perform assessments and guidance to ensure that food insecurity challenges in our communities are solved through evidence-based strategies that help clients eat healthy. Healthy eating is paramount in preventing and managing diet-related chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia.

Horizons Food Pantry is an Extension partner in Adams County. Horizons Food Pantry is committed to its clients by providing healthy, nutritious food. They have a variety of fruits and vegetables, including canned food options with low sodium or no added sugar. These foods align with USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans to reduce chronic diseases, such as hypertension and diabetes. The milk stocked at Horizons Food Pantry is 1% milk, thereby reducing fat consumption among their clients.

At Horizons, clients can check their blood pressure and receive health screenings, thanks to a partnership with Blessing Health System. Horizons Food Pantry provides food for an average of 1,490 clients monthly.

HEAT Project strives for health equity

One in 10 people, including one in eight children, in Illinois struggle with hunger every day, according to Feeding America. When families are hungry, making healthier choices can be more difficult. A new project will focus on promoting food access to the French-speaking community in Schuyler County.

The Health Equity Achieved Together Project is a multi-disciplinary project with Illinois SNAP-Ed and other programs within University of Illinois Extension. Programs implement innovative strategies to improve health outcomes and reduce community barriers to healthier lifestyles. Working with others across Extension enables the HEAT Project to leverage expertise and networks across Illinois, thereby maximizing the positive impact on the health of Illinois families.

The HEAT Project in Schuyler County seeks to increase racial and health equity by connecting the French-speaking community with available resources. The project will develop tailored interventions to promote access to healthy foods and improved physical activity. Key stakeholders include area farmers, fitness center, and the Grow Rushville Schuyler County Coalition.

“We have a lot of food, and we will be happy to serve the community to increase food access,” says Ron Herr, manager of the Schuyler County Food Basket, a local food pantry. Possible interventions include growing value crops that the community will readily consume and providing translated materials to food pantries and fitness centers.

“I will be glad to know the types of food the French population in Rushville would like to have. If they are not available here, I can experiment with growing them in our greenhouse and make them available at the farmers market in Rushville,” says Aaron Ferguson of HomeFresh Products.

Projects will also plan sustainability and inclusion strategies to ensure that the projects have long-lasting community impact.
**ABCS OF SCHOOL NUTRITION**

The ABCs of School Nutrition is a partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education and University of Illinois Extension. The program provides professional development opportunities for school nutrition professionals across the state. In addition to trainings, Illinois Extension works directly with area schools to introduce methods and strategies for marketing their meals to students. This partnership also seeks to educate kitchen staff and students on the importance of a balanced diet. Leah Erke, Extension educator, guided school staff through the state for handling food safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through online and in-person webinars, 235 school food service workers learned the latest in food safety standards, including storage, cleaning, sanitizing, and personal hygiene. Participants who completed this Illinois Department of Public Health-approved course earned a food handler certificate, valid for three years, as well as continuing education credits for their USDA Professional Standards training.

**PRESSURE CANNER TESTING**

Over time, pressure canner dial gauges may become inaccurate. If the pressure is lower than recommended, the internal temperature of the food will not be high enough to kill harmful bacteria. To ensure safety in the home canning process, it is recommended to have dial gauges tested annually. Illinois Extension offices in Adams, Hancock, Pike, and Schuyler counties offer free testing of dial pressure gauges. Lids can be dropped off during normal office hours. For more information, contact the Extension office in your county.

**ORGANWISE GUYS**

OrganWise Guys is an educational curriculum designed to teach healthy living through nutrition and physical activity. SNAP-Ed staff deliver the program at local schools. Students learn about different organs of the body and how they are affected by nutrition. The program gives kid-friendly names to the vital organs and teaches how eating healthy optimizes their functions. This curriculum improves children’s health and academic performance. They pay attention to what they eat and understand the benefits of physical activity as it impacts the different organs of their body. The lessons are done throughout the school year and tailored to fit the schedule preferred by the classroom teacher. This evidence-based program can be administered in your school or childcare facility to promote health and nutrition awareness. For more information on how your students can benefit from this program, contact your local Extension office. Together, we can support our children to live healthy and reduce the prevalence of obesity in our communities.

**ILLINOIS JUNIOR CHEF**

The Illinois Junior Chef program was developed by University of Illinois Extension’s Illinois Nutrition Education Program. It teaches healthy attitudes and behaviors in youth age 8 to 13. The classes provide hands-on lessons in cooking skills and educates youth using the USDA MyPlate guide to make healthy food group choices. Adams County Extension hosted Illinois Junior Chef in June. SNAP-Ed Community Outreach Worker Siera Duesterhaus taught 11 aspiring chefs how to read a recipe, measure and mix ingredients, grate and peel foods, safely use kitchen knives, juice citrus fruits, and crack an egg. Over the course of the program, the kids prepared pumpkin pudding, fruit kabobs, huevos rancheros, layered bean dip, colorful coleslaw, and veggie stuffed pitas.
No-till and cover crops improve vegetable production

Cover crops have been incorporated into row crop production for many years. The process has many benefits, including soil health through reduced erosion and compaction and increased organic matter. With the management in a vegetable production system, it makes perfect sense to implement the use of cover crops.

With the help of commercial agriculture educator Nathan Johanning, tomato and pepper plants were transplanted into a no-till, cover cropped system with a no-till mechanical transplanter. The trial was held at John Wood Community College in Quincy. At planting, a complete 20-20-20 water soluble fertilizer was applied at a rate of 10 lb/A. Additional nitrogen at planting was applied as ammonium nitrate at 60 lb/A of nitrogen. Annual ryegrass was broadcast seeded on half of the 96’ x 30’ area on Dec. 3 at a rate of 25 lbs. per acre to make a cover vs. no cover comparison; an increased seed rate was used to ensure good coverage with the late seeding date. The cover crop was terminated three days prior to planting with glyphosate, and planting occurred on June 14. Planting into the cover crop went well; soil moisture had been a concern since the field was warm and dry for a few weeks prior, but it turned out to be perfect.

Because of the dry period prior to planting, plants were watered after planting. When watering plants in the cover cropped area, water infiltration was much better with little to no runoff when compared to areas with no cover. Having used annual ryegrass as the cover crop rather than cereal rye, staff noticed the crop planted in the cover crop had reduced growth earlier in the season; this is likely due to nutrient tie up from the annual ryegrass. This area had not been planted for about five years, leaving it to grow up in weeds. The cover cropped area provided good competition for weeds and helped to suppress weed pressure later into the season.

At harvest, yield was measured as fruit numbers per plant and individual fruit weight. Data was collected for 10 plants per treatment. As for yield results, the tomatoes planted into the bare ground area yielded 12.5 tomatoes per plant weighing 7.5 lbs per fruit. In the cover crop area, tomatoes yielded 11.3 tomatoes per plant weighing 7.2 lbs per fruit. Peppers in the bare ground area had an average yield of 16.3 peppers per plant and an average weight of 6.6 lbs per pepper. In the cover cropped area, the average pepper yield per plant was 15.4 peppers with an average weight of 6.1 lbs per pepper. Overall, tomatoes and peppers grown in the cover crop area resulted in less fruit per plant and lower fruit weight.

For more information, contact Katie Parker (keparkr2@illinois.edu), or Nathan Johanning (njohann@illinois.edu).
Master Gardeners help communities
Master Gardeners are trained horticultural experts who serve their communities through service projects and delivery of educational programs. There is growing evidence that time spent around plants and in green spaces has many benefits, including improved health, better interpersonal relationships, and a higher quality of life. Sustainable home landscapes also increase property values and build stronger ecosystems for plants and wildlife.

Illinois Stories
Several Adams County Master Gardeners were guest stars on the PBS program, *Illinois Stories*. The episode, which premiered September 16, highlighted the gardens at the John Wood Home in Quincy. The historic 14-room mansion was built in 1835 for John Wood, Illinois’ 12th governor. The gardens feature a variety of period piece herbs, grasses, and flowers, all cultivated and maintained by Master Gardener volunteers.

**31**
Master Gardener volunteers

**732**
Volunteer hours

**$21,491**
in Value Provided

Learn how you can get involved!
https://extension.illinois.edu/mg

Master Gardener Home Tour
The August meeting of Master Gardeners was held at the home of Master Gardener Jack Ball. Jack is also an Extension Master Naturalist. Jack explained his irrigation system for flowers, herbs, and vegetables. He showed how he has integrated tiers of fruit and vegetable beds, along with numerous fruit and ornamental trees, into his sloping backyard. A highlight of the evening was learning about nature’s answer to poison ivy, the “Spotted Jewelweed.” When crushed and the juicy pulp is applied to skin, Jewelweed neutralizes the oil. The meeting ended with mulberry syrup, harvested from Jack’s tree, served over vanilla ice cream.
Agriculture Potpourri teaches teachers about agriculture

Economically resilient communities are built on a solid foundation with plans for growth, plans for responding to emergencies and disasters, and innovative approaches to promote economic vitality. With 75% of the state devoted to farmland, agricultural operations, both large and small, represent a critically important contributor to the economic vitality of Illinois’ local and state economy.

Seven Hancock County teachers spent two days learning about nontraditional agriculture in the area and its vital role in modern agriculture. Teachers from Carthage, Nauvoo, Southeastern, and Warsaw schools earned professional development hours while on tours of different agriculture entities in the area.

Day one morning tours included Little Creek Alpacas and RR3 Farm, both outside of Plymouth. At Little Creek Alpacas, teachers learned about specialty livestock, the process of raising the animals, and the by-products available from them. They hand-feed the animals. At RR3 Farm, teachers learned about many different varieties of flowers used in the fresh bouquets sold at local farmers markets and how to preserve flowers for ornaments and other craft projects. Each teacher took home a small bouquet and a farm-fresh strawberry sample. In the afternoon, participants learned about new materials and activities from Stephanie Hospelhorn, education specialist with Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom.

Day two began with an agriculture scavenger hunt before heading to Warsaw to learn about making soy candles at Rustic, Refined, Repete Candle Company. Each teacher poured a candle and learned about the company’s background and how it gives back to local organizations. The final tour was at Baxter’s Vineyards, Illinois’ oldest winery. The outing took teachers through the company’s history, the wine-making process, a visit to the vines and orchard, and ended with the opportunity to sample some of the products.

Each teacher received ideas and resources for immediate use in their classrooms. The Hancock County Agricultural Literacy Program is in its 22nd year. Program facilitators include University of Illinois Extension, Hancock County Farm Bureau, and Hancock County Soil & Water Conservation District.

For more information about the program, contact Dawn Weinberg at 217-357-2150 or dweinber@illinois.edu.

Learn more!
extension.illinois.edu/abhps/unit-14-ag-literacy

Teachers from Hancock County participated in Agriculture Potpourri, an Ag in the Classroom program. The two-day professional development opportunity included tours of specialty agriculture businesses located in throughout the area.
Real Colors® helps us understand others
In March, Illinois Extension staff members Betsy Bauer, Katie Parker, and Shelby Crow facilitated a Real Colors® workshop for the JWCC Student Government Association. Real Colors® is a unique personality assessment workshop designed to be entertaining and user-friendly.

The four-color personality assessment is an exciting, interactive experience using colors, pictures, and interactive activities to hook the participants. The interaction allows participants to learn a great deal of information quickly. Participants leave the four-hour workshop with tools they can use and apply to their own life.

After this training, participants know their personality color and are able to define their strengths, values, joys, and needs. In addition, participants learn how to communicate more effectively with other personality colors.

Additional trainings were held at the Brown County Learning Center, John Wood Community College Academic Talent Search, Mt. Sterling YMCA, the Tracy Family Foundation, and Quincy Teen Reach.

If you are interested in learning more about this program or would like for your organization to participate, please contact Shelby Crow at sschoon@illinois.edu

Learn more!
extension.illinois.edu/economic-development/real-colors-personality-model
4-H Food Advocacy project helps families in need

During the pandemic, the need for food resources for people became even more important. As people lost their jobs or worked reduced hours, it became important to help people meet basic needs. Lance Woolam, a 4-H member in Adams County, has volunteered at the Open Hands Food Pantry at the St. John’s Lutheran Church in Quincy for two years. He restocks the pantry and portions foods into smaller quantities after school. During the pandemic, the restrictions on how the pantry could operate meant that Lance could not help out as much as normal.

Lance received a $500 Illinois State 4-H Food Advocacy grant for a program called “Nosh Packs.” The program provides food packs for kids. Josh planned the meals, snacks, and other items in the packs. His priority was food, but he also wanted to promote 4-H so kids who may not know about the program could discover its benefit. The funds provided supplies for 25 packs.

Visitors who came to the pantry with children in their household were eligible to receive a bag. Each bag contained dry goods to make one full, healthy meal and one snack from the USDA Healthy Foods cookbook, one ready-to-eat microwaveable meal that was high in protein, and three quick snacks, such as popcorn or granola bars. The bags also contained a USDA cookbook and other resources, along with flyers about 4-H. After two days at the food pantry, all of the packs were distributed.

Lance was asked to present his Food Advocacy Grant project at the Illinois 4-H Food Action Summit in May 2021. He hopes to expand the project in the future with additional grants so that his Nosh Packs project can reach more kids in the county to provide access to food, learn about healthy options, and learn about 4-H. Jennifer Breeden
Youth are thriving in 4-H
Thriving youth are the core of healthy, robust communities. Illinois Extension’s mentorship-based youth development model focuses on social competence, academic success, career development, and community connection. The 4-H experience creates opportunities and environments for all youth to thrive now and in the future.

Illinois Junior Livestock Competition
Hollie Luthy received second place overall at the Illinois State Junior Division Livestock Judging competition in Peoria. Fifty-three youth, age 8 to 13, competed by judging three classes of beef, three classes of swine, and two classes of sheep. Part of their overall score included answering five questions on each species. Holly is a member of The Lucky Clovers 4-H Club in Mt. Sterling and also participates in the Brown/Schuyler 4-H Livestock Judging Team led by Matt Perry.

Crystal Clovers concentrate on community service
This Schuyler County 4-H Club spends its time volunteering for local organizations. Throughout the year, they put the 4-H Pledge into action. They gave their hands to the Schuyler County Humane Society, helping to clean kennels and care for animals awaiting adoption. They opened their hearts to the Schuyler County Christmas Basket, a program that delivers food and gifts to residents during the holiday season. They used their heads to think of residents at Rushville Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, for whom they handcrafted scarecrows to be displayed throughout the facility. Crystal Clovers focused on health by holding a food drive for the Schuyler County Food Basket in an effort to fight against hunger in their community.

4-H STATE SHOTGUN SHOOT
Byron DiPrima, 4-H member from Hancock County, placed fourth in the Illinois State 4-H Shotgun Shoot held in September at Brittany Shooting Park near Bunker Hill. Byron is eligible to be on the 2022 state trap team and participate in the 4-H National Trap Shoot.

Website call-to-action
extension.illinois.edu/abhps/4-h-youth-development
My sheep project has taught me how to be responsible.

This project was fulfilling and exciting!

One thing I will use in the future from 4-H is hard work pays off!

I was so happy to enter my first livestock show at the Western Illinois Fair!

I learned that it takes a lot of hard work to achieve something.

We also spend family time out at the barn and at the show.

I can’t wait to do it again next year!

4-H has given me the opportunity to make friends and long-lasting relationships.
4-H has been a fun organization to be in and has forced me to grow in many personal areas. I’m thankful for the opportunities it has given me.

Working in the barn and getting to be with other 4-H members from all over the county is one of my favorite parts of being in 4-H. The acquaintances made will last a lifetime, I am sure of this.

I had so much fun this year in 4-H. I can’t wait to keep learning and to try something new next year!

It’s always fun to see the other kids and visit with them about their projects.

I learned to never give up even if I was having a hard time.

I met some new friends and learned a lot.
Junior Master Gardener program creates early love for gardening

Summer 2021 provided new growth and learning for 12 Adams County youth who participated in Extension’s Junior Master Gardeners program at John Wood Community College. Adams County 4-H program coordinator Betsy Kempe and local foods and small farms educator Katie Parker taught garden maintenance, soil management, plant parts, harvest, and storage. The program included hands-on activities in the garden, such as planting and mulching, as well as experience in the kitchen preparing garden-related snacks, such as soil profile pudding, plant parts salsa, graham cracker garden, and other themed snacks.

Illinois Ag in the Classroom coordinator Robin Thomson joined the group to talk about the importance of pollinators in the garden, and Margie Williams discussed alternative garden types, such as aeroponics, with the kids. A total of 400 pounds of produce was grown by the Junior Master Gardeners and donated to Horizons Food Pantry in Quincy and the 24/7 Produce Stand in Liberty. This program was made possible through a grant provided by Compeer Financial.

Ag in the Classroom

Our agriculture literacy coordinators in Adams and Hancock counties were thrilled to have the opportunity to return classrooms and hold in-person programs this year.

Learn more about our Ag Literacy program: extension.illinois.edu/abhps/unit-14-ag-literacy
Cover photos: (top left) Levi from Camden Good Neighbors 4-H spends time getting his swine ready for showing. (top right) David, a member of Crystal Clovers 4-H Club, packs a bag with donated food items. (bottom left) Teachers from Hancock County learn about specialty agriculture programs in their area (bottom right) Luke Jacquot shows off his tractor skills at the Hancock 4-H Fair.