

2024

KENTUCKY  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

UK MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT
KSU COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, AND NATURAL RESOURCES

NELSON COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Report to the People

We're part of the University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University off-campus information network. Let us connect you to UK, KSU and the world. We deliver information, education, and solutions. And we grow ideas into better communities, stronger local economies, and healthier lives.



About UK Extension

We improve the lives of Kentuckians by:

- Strengthening Kentucky's farms, food systems and natural resources through innovative research, education and collaboration to improve profitability and sustainability.
- Building the health and well-being of Kentuckians – physically, mentally and economically – to improve quality of life and ensure bright futures for all.
- Engaging communities to build vibrant economies by connecting businesses and people with Extension.

Vision

University of Kentucky Extension is the trusted, local resource for every Kentuckian.

Mission

University of Kentucky Extension engages with Kentuckians to connect them to resources, research and innovative solutions.

Introducing Our Team

Our office is staffed with friendly professionals who work to make our community stronger. We also have access to specialists and research-based resources at the University of Kentucky to help us address even the most complex challenges.



Robbie Smith
Agriculture &
Natural Resources
Agent



Danielle Hagler
Family & Consumer
Sciences Agent



**Samantha
Gabbard**
4-H Youth
Development Agent



**Malena
Alexander**
Nutrition Education
Program Assistant



Jenna Meredith
4-H
Program Assistant



Kathy Ballard
Extension Staff
Assistant



**Georganne
Collins**
Extension Staff
Assistant

By the Numbers



Agriculture and Natural Resources

- 90 improved equipment or facilities
- 250 people gained knowledge of forage production, management &/or profitability (species, best management practices, forage harvest & storage, pasture renovation)
- 87 people gained knowledge in honey production, marketing and proper maintenance



Family and Consumer Sciences

- 100 individuals reported an increased knowledge of substance use prevention, addiction, and/or recovery
- 4,500 Dollars in Senior benefits redeemed at farmers' markets
- 600 participants participated in Cook Wild Kentucky recipe-tasting events



4-H Youth Development

- 3,122 youth participants in the Extension Programs
- 249 youth in organized 4-H clubs
- 340 youth in overnight camping programs
- 3,164 youth in 4-H School enrichment programs



Community and Economic Development

- 25 participated in new activities related to stronger local food systems
- 60 individuals engaged in coalitions/organizations to address a significant community issue
- 20 businesses reached through Extension agritourism programming



Nutrition Education

- 344 youth who participated in Nutrition Education programs
- 21 adults enrolled in long term nutrition education programs
- 63 unique programming efforts through the NEP program
- 93 youth graduates from long term NEP programs
- 10 programming sites/community partners for the NEP program



Leadership Development

- 20 Kentucky Volunteer Forum participants
- 3 youth on state 4-H Leadership Boards
- 65 Camp Volunteers
- Officers trainings (4-H & Extension Homemakers)
- 100 Master Cattlemen
- 75 Master Gardeners
- area/state/national level leaders

The Value of Nelson County Extension Volunteers- \$549,402.21

- **75** Certified Master Gardeners and active volunteers
- **1,010** Master Gardener hours completed in county
- **118** Nelson County Extension Homemaker Members
- **1,333** hours Nelson County Extension Homemaker members volunteered for EXTENSION activities and events
- **12,633** hours Nelson County Extension Homemaker members volunteered in COMMUNITY activities and events
- **411** 4-H volunteers
- **4,000** volunteer hours devoted to 4-H
- **24** volunteers assisting with Nutrition Education Programs
- **181** volunteer hours devoted to nutrition education programs
- **100** volunteer hours rendered toward Extension arts activities



- Total volunteer hours- 19,257
- Value of volunteer time according to Independent Sector-\$28.53
- Value to the community for Extension Volunteer time-\$549,402.21

Family and Consumer Sciences- Wits Workout

About 11% of the U.S. older adult population is at risk for or suffers from subjective cognitive decline. Intellectual challenge and social interaction are important for brain health (University of Illinois Extension). Wits Workout, developed by the University of Illinois Extension is a holistic, multi-modal workshop series that offers adults ages 50 and older facilitated, interactive dialogue and activities about behaviors that promote brain health.

A 6-week series of Wits Workout was offered by the Nelson County Cooperative Extension Service to 15 adult participants ages 50 and over. During the hour and a half sessions participants learned about a brain-health topic (examples: food and nutrition, sleep, physical activity, social engagement, techniques for focus) and completed a number of challenging written and verbal puzzles. The group also took part in nutrition education programs that allowed them to sample recipes that could support healthy brain function.

An evaluation completed during the final session indicated:

- 100% of participants gained friendships.
- 100% gained ideas they could try.
- 83% gained knowledge that they shared with others.
- 83% Pay closer attention and stay focused to remember things.
- 83% have tried to increase their social contact and be more intentional about socializing with others.



Participants noted that they looked forward to the next session and learned not to be so hard on themselves and even enjoyed laughing with others. After one session, a participant shared that she valued the program because she was able to make new friends with people from different backgrounds and was able to have constructive conversation with participants who had different political opinions. She was able to find common ground through the program and plans to continue the friendship outside of the program.



Family and Consumer Sciences- Disaster Education

Kentuckians have experienced increasing severity and frequency of Natural Disasters. Our staff have supported efforts to assist in recovery efforts after the 2021 tornados in Western Kentucky and 2022 Floods in Eastern Kentucky. They have coordinated with local groups for meaningful response efforts such as donations of agricultural supplies or flood cleanup resources and assisted directly in affected areas. In Nelson County, disaster education has been an ongoing part of our programming. In 2022, Nelson County Cooperative Extension hosted a Disaster Ready Resource fair. In 2023, the Navigating Trauma After a Disaster lesson was selected as an Extension Homemakers lesson. At the area level, FCS Agent, Danielle Hagler led leader trainings for 8 counties. Participants learned how to make a disaster kit and were given access to Cooperative Extension and FEMA publications. Participants took the lessons back to their clubs and shared the information with additional Homemakers.

At the state level, Danielle serves as a contact for the national Extension Disaster Education Network, is on the Extension Disaster Response Committee and the In the Faces of Disaster Grant Team. In 2024, Danielle presented a workshop about mindfulness after disasters at the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Disaster Conference. Locally, Danielle has worked with UK Specialists to host the Local Approach to Discussion-Based Disaster Exercises and Readiness (LADDER) game, that uses gamification to foster new collaborations with local emergency responders. As a result, local leaders involved in Emergency Management left with an increased understanding of the resources available through Cooperative Extension and identified areas in which they need additional training to respond to agricultural needs during a disaster. Nelson County Cooperative Extension continues to help our community prepare, respond and recover from disasters. During the winter floods of 2025, Danielle partnered with local media to saturate radio, television, print and social medias with educational resources to help the community prepare for the floods and cold temperatures. Educational materials included food and water safety, personal and emotional safety, clean up of debris and salvaging water damaged materials. We will continue to walk alongside our community in the face of any future disaster.



Nutrition Education Program- LEAP

Nutrition and physical activity are important for children to live a healthy lifestyle. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that children eat fewer fruits and vegetables than the recommended daily amount. To aid in helping with the problem, the Nutrition Education Program (NEP) Assistant at the Nelson County Cooperative Extension Office taught a weekly, 1 hour program to a group of 25 kindergarteners at Foster Heights Elementary using the Literacy, Eating, and Activity Preschool/Primary (LEAP) curriculum. During each of the 6 lessons that were taught, a different health-related children's book was read, an activity was implemented to reinforce the message and a healthy recipe was made so the students could sample. Also, to reinforce the message at home, 150 newsletters that included recipes and nutrition education were given to the students.

All 20 students who completed the LEAP Program showed improvement in their ability to choose healthy foods and 18 of those same students showed improvement in the knowledge of physical activity. One student who was extremely reluctant to try any new foods, became very curious with each lesson. Finally, in the final lesson, the student tried and loved the healthy recipe (spider bites) that was provided! Spider bite snacks are made from two round crackers with peanut butter between them. Students add pretzel legs to them to make them look like a bite sized spider. The student stated "Are you proud of me for trying a spider bite? It's my new favorite!"



Nutrition Education Program- Super Star Chef

Superstar Chef is a three-day hands-on cooking and nutrition Cooperative Extension program. The program was designed to empower limited-resource youth with basic cooking skills so they can make the healthy choice. Program content focuses on hands-on food preparation skills, kitchen safety and appliance use, food safety procedures, nutrition education, and physical activity. The camp included a family visit to the farmers market where youth learned about local foods by interviewing farmers, doing a scavenger hunt and earned money to spend with vendors.

Nelson County Family and Consumer Sciences and 4-HYD Extension Agents collaborated with the Nutrition Education Assistant, 4-H Program Assistant 4-H Summer Intern and two volunteers to offer the Superstar Chef Camp program to 16 students.

Following the program, 100% of participants agreed that they could help make a family meal, cut up food using a knife, follow recipe directions and use a recipe with help. 94% agreed that they could measure ingredients correctly, cook eggs on a stove, and make a meal with vegetables and/or vegetables. 100% can identify healthy foods and plan to drink more water. be more physically active. 94% plan to drink less soda, eat more fruits and try new foods. Parents noted that after taking part in the program, their children offered to cook meals for the family and tried new foods that they did not normally eat at home. One mom shared, “My child had so much fun at chef camp. They cooked their own lunch every day, learned about reading labels to make healthier choices, and visited the farmers market. They even used their new skills to make me breakfast.”



Agriculture and Natural Resources - Back to Basics

Most farmers have plenty on their plates, including full time jobs, & management can be a reaction versus a plan. The specialist lead "Back to Basics Beef Program", aims to hit the reset button on the cattle operation. This can happen after a thorough evaluation of the land, feed stuff, record keeping & herd health are compiled by a team of specialists. The evaluation began by identifying the positives of the operation & identifying where improvements could be implemented & then setting attainable goals that will increase efficiency & profitability. The agent pulled soil test & hay test, An evaluation of the 100 animal herd was conducted (including pregnancy stage, vaccination standing, banding, & proper tagging systems) by the UK beef specialist & associate along with the agent & owners. Forage quality & soil fertility was analyzed by the UK Forage specialist. The educational program response to this analysis is in part as follows:

- Implement cross breeding.
- Take advantage of high nutritional plain by selecting bulls with more growth.
- Contacting Fish & Wildlife to help with building a buzzard deterrent.
- Contact the ag engineering faculty to help with designing the working facilities.
- Creating a defined calving season, then marketing calves in a sale like CPH after backgrounding. Possibly Artificial Insemination.
- Implement vaccination & deworming plan.

After the initial analysis, a plan was developed to create two calving seasons, & the first steps were taken to implement this initiative. From the pregnancy check, cattle were grouped into three categories: cull cattle, spring calving & fall calving. In November plans were made to artificially inseminate the cows for fall calving.



Agriculture and Natural Resources - Master Cattlemen Program

Beef production is one of the largest agriculture economic engines for Nelson County. The 2022 Agriculture census estimated around 34000 cattle on farms in Nelson County. This herd translates into a little over \$20,000,000. in annual sales or 25% of all ag receipts. The industry's value is unquestionable, and other enterprises depend on a thriving and profitable beef industry. A lower capital outlay potential still makes this agriculture venture more easily accessible for new and beginning farm families than in comparison to other highly leveraged operations.

To meet the growing interest in beef cattle production, Marion, Nelson and Washington counties collaborated to offer the Kentucky Master Cattlemen's Program. Fifty individuals participated in 20 hours of specialized instruction. Genetics, land management, nutrition management, breeding, health, marketing, and facilities were discussed in depth by specialists from the University of Kentucky.

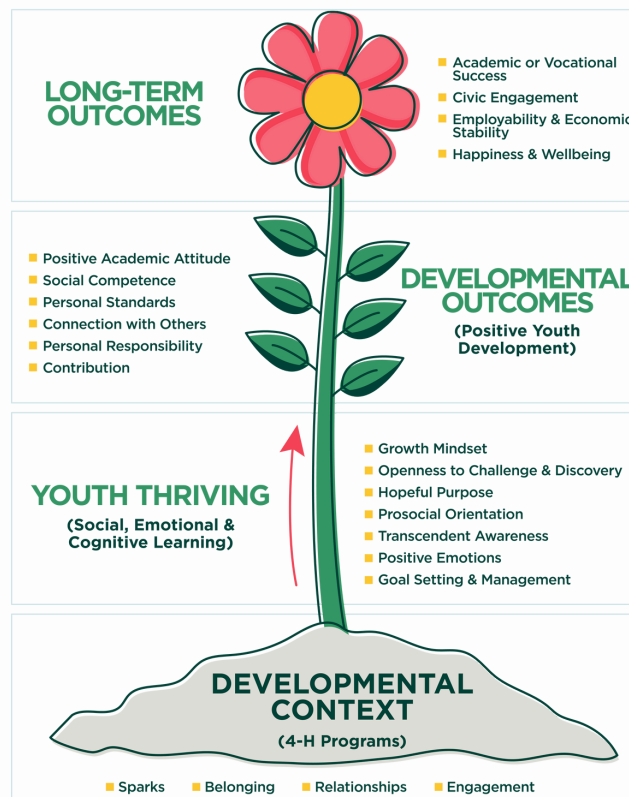
Most producers identified two or more practices that they intend to implement on their farms in future seasons. By implementing these new practices, they reported an estimated-on farm economic benefit of between \$110,000 - 230,000. The survey indicated that 58% of participants increased their understanding of EPD's and their importance on the farm. Their understanding of the value of crossbreeding increased by 35% from the pre survey to the post survey. We saw a 77% increase in knowledge gained in their understanding of "How calves become persistently infected (PI) with bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) virus".



4-H Youth Development - What is 4-H?



4-H is an organization for youth ages 5-18 that provides education and life skill development opportunities to help youth grow into confident, capable, and contributing members of their communities. Three skills that are focused on in each one of our opportunities are communication, civic engagement, and leadership. There are several ways to become involved with the 4-H program, through school enrichment, community clubs, short-term interest projects, individual study, and 4-H camp. These workshops and meetings take place at various times of the week or weekend to suit the needs of the youth involved. The 4-H program year begins in September and runs through August; each year youth need to re-enroll in the program. 4-H has seven core content areas of education (Agriculture, Health & Wellbeing, Natural Resources, Science, Engineering & Technology, Leadership, Communication/Expressive Arts, and Family & Consumer Sciences) to help youth find their spark and pursue their interests beyond 4-H!



4-H Youth Development - 4-H Camp

In July 2024, Nelson County 4-H made their annual journey to Lake Cumberland 4-H Camp in Jabez, Kentucky for a week of a lifetime! With the support of 37 adult leaders and 28 teen leaders, 232 campers were able to make new friends, challenge themselves with new activities, and enjoy the outdoors.

The campers emphasized that their favorite activities of the week were fishing, playing gaga ball, facing their fears on the high ropes course, and learning how to shoot a bow and arrow. 197 of the 232 campers stated that they spent more time outside than they typically do through attending Nelson County 4-H Camp.

This week would not be possible without the generosity of many donors and countless hours of planning, training, and preparing from our volunteers. Thank YOU, Nelson County community, for making the best better yet again!



4-H Youth Development - A Trip to Capitol Hill

In March 2024, a group of 4-H members traveled to Capitol Hill in Frankfort, Kentucky. 4-H'ers had the opportunity to tour the capitol, visit with Representative Massaroni, attend a House of Ag Committee meeting, and meet other 4-H members from across the state. This opportunity introduces youth to the governmental system and provides them with the knowledge of how decisions for the state are made. Youth utilize their communication and leadership skills to professionally communicate with elected officials and understand that they have a voice that can be heard in decisions being made each day.



Community and Economic Development- The Bale Trail

The Nelson County Bale trail started in 2020 during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic when social distancing was encouraged. 2024 was the 5th year for the trail. The trail serves as a family friendly, free agritourism adventure, and as a fundraiser for Nelson County 4-H raising over \$4,000 over 5 years to support youth development programs.

The 2024 trail saw 20 displays located at 15 different stops throughout the county. 13 community partners including Bardstown Tourism and two roadside markets were involved in providing this fun community event that was free for participants to take part in. The social media interaction for the project was outstanding with over 96,000 views and 2,937 votes for the fan favorite. This social media interaction brings new viewers to Nelson County Cooperative Extension content and to community partners social media pages. In 2024, the trail partnered with Kentucky Ag in the classroom to drive traffic to their online virtual farm field trip series. These educational videos had over 290 views.

From the small town of Fairfield that set up a Bale Trail Display: “Participating in the Bale Trail brought new people, new curiosity and some revenue to the community of Fairfield. Once they enjoyed seeing our display, they visited the little grocery store across the road and also drove through the town to see other sights in Fairfield.”





Cooperative Extension Service

Nelson County

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"Extension Today" on WBRT
11:00 a.m.
Every Thursday of the month

See us on TV!
Watch special segment on PLG13

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