

# Report to the People Russell County • 2023

## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



**Russell County 4-H Shooting Sports had three members and a coach participating on the state team competing at the National Competition in Grand Island Nebraska. Russell County members were Sarah Stephens (front left), Coach Jared Foley (standing left) Cass Foley (standing second from left), and Eli Foley (standing center).**

### **4-H Youth Development**

#### **Making the Best Better in Shooting Sports**

Russell County 4-H began its shooting sports program in the mid-1970s and was one of the first programs in the state of Kentucky. The program fosters mastery by learning firearm safety and marksmanship, belonging by taking part in club and community activities, independence by demonstrating responsible firearm use, and generosity by participating in community service projects. All core competencies of the 4-H shooting sports program are developed under the

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#### **For More Information, Please Contact us at:**

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support of caring adult volunteers. Three Russell County 4-H youth were invited to participate with the first ever Kentucky 4-H Gold Muzzleloader Team representing the state at the National 4-H Shooting Sports competition in Grand Island, NE. A team of 4 youth were selected. Two team members as well as the alternate were from the Russell County 4-H program. One of the Russell Co. 4-H Shooting Sports coaches helped prepare the team for competition.

After months of practice, the team competed against 15 other teams from across the nation. Afterwards, one of the youth said, "This was the absolute best experience of my life. I'm so thankful to have this amazing opportunity. I had the best team, coaches, and state coordinator. We may not have placed the best. At the end of the week, it isn't the scores that we will remember. The experience as a whole and having the honor of being the first team to ever represent Kentucky on the national level is something that we will never forget...4-H is amazing. Our motto is "to make the best better" and they definitely do that."

## Making Memories in the Kitchen



*Samantha Arutyunov, a member of the 4-H Cooking Club using a hand mixer at a club meeting.*

The Russell County 4-H program offered a series of cooking classes to elementary school youth. The students learned basic kitchen life skills such as reading a recipe, measuring and mixing ingredients, using an oven, and cooking/

baking safety. Teaching youth to cook instills basic skills for living, promotes responsibility, healthy eating habits, and self-sufficiency. At the end of the program, all of the youth indicated that they had learned how to read a

recipe, how to measure ingredients properly, and could crack an egg. Most of the youth indicated that they could read a recipe and prepare a simple recipe by themselves. Over 88% of the youth had put their skills into practice outside of the 4-H meetings. They had cooked some of the 4-H recipes at home and assisted their parents in cooking for their families. At the final meeting, we baked and decorated sugar cookies and had a cookie exchange. All of the youth brought a holiday treat and shared the recipe with the rest of the 4-Hers; we did this to add verbal communication and leadership components to the club experience.

## Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS)

### New FCS Agent

The Russell County Extension Office welcomed a new Family and Consumer Sciences Agent in early September 2022! Megan Gullett



comes to Extension after having filled the roles of Student Advisor with the Kentucky Technical and Community College System and ADA Compliance Officer at Campbellsville University. Her undergraduate degree is in International Studies/Economics and her master's degree is in Postsecondary Administration and Student Affairs, both from Murray State University. Megan has been very busy since beginning her Extension career, offering several programs such as Cooking through the Calendar, working with the RCHS Cooking Club, and a Charcuterie Board workshop in conjunction with ANR Agent Jonathan Oakes. She also presented a booth about sun safety at this year's Farm Safety Day for third grade students in the Russell County School System. Megan is eager to work with the residents of Russell County.

### LEAP for New Vegetables



According to the 2022 Kentucky Kids Count data, Russell County ranks 93 of 170 in school district rankings for kindergarteners' readiness to learn and 77 of 120 in having children in poverty. These statistics directly reflect students in Head Start, a program geared towards providing kindergarten preparedness to low-income families. Russell County Family and Consumer Science Agent, Megan Gullett, in partnership with Russell Springs and Jamestown Head Starts, and Elevated Child Daycare, taught the LEAP (Literacy, Eating, and Activity for Primary) Curriculum. During one visit with the Head Start and head start aged children in daycare, the book, The Gigantic Turnip, was read to 38 students. Students completed activities and learned about the benefits of trying new foods and growing a garden. In this lesson, students utilized critical thinking skills and tried a new vegetable. They were asked to try eating a turnip. Fifty percent of the students were willing to try a new vegetable. Of the students who tried a turnip for the first time, 78% of them liked it and stated they would be willing to eat it again.



## **Agriculture and Natural Resources**

### **Predator Workshop**

Small Ruminant production has grown by leaps and bounds in the state of Kentucky in the past few years. Russell, Pulaski, and Casey Counties have seen a huge rise in sheep and goat production. With this in mind a workshop in Russell County was developed with other organizations to educate producers on predator control.

Russell, Pulaski, and Casey County Extension Offices, Southeast Kentucky Sheep Producers Association, University of Kentucky

Wildlife Specialist, Kentucky Office of the State Veterinarian, members of the United Trappers of Kentucky, and an expert on guard dogs hosted a workshop focused on small ruminant protection and predator control. During the course, an on-farm demonstration was held to show different techniques for predator trapping, hunting and exclusion.

Thirty participants attended the workshop, from across the state. At the conclusion, participants were surveyed about the course and what they had learned. 100% of participants said that they had learned new ways to protect livestock from predators, 93% said they were very likely to implement control techniques for predators on their operation, 85% said they had learned how to better care for their guard animals, 90% said they learned about new predators to small ruminants, 100% said they would recommend this workshop to other small ruminant producers.



### **Protecting our Youth on the Farm**

The Russell County landscape is home to an assortment of terrains. The county is home to large amounts of farmland, woodlands, streams, rivers and a large lake. Russell County Extension Office held its annual Progressive Farm Safety Day in conjunction with the Progressive Ag Foundation and hosted approximately 220, 3rd grade students from the county. The farm safety day was also attended by approximately 40 teachers, and community volunteers to help make the day a success.

This year at the safety day we were able to get representatives from multiple local first-respondents, and well as representatives from many local businesses and state-wide agencies. Since the majority of our youth participants will encounter many different situation while living on or visiting the farm, we tried to bring in as many different educational

stations as possible, in an effort to prepare the students for emergency or safety situations. Educational booths for this year at the safety day included Chemical Safety, Basic First Aid, Fire Safety, Lawnmower Safety, Wild Animal Safety, Sun Safety, and the dangers of Vaping, along with several others.

Farm Safety doesn't just involve tractors, trucks, livestock, and lawn equipment. On the farm, or even in everyday life, students could potentially come into contact with firearms, illegal drug labs, wild animals, chemicals, fire, or an emergency situation that involves the need for basic First-Aid. Students could also come into contact with wild animals as well. Another area of concern in our county is ATV safety. With an increase in the amount of available trails and increase in the number of ATV's owned across the board, more youth are exposed to ATV's.

Once safety day was complete, students were asked to write a 1/2 page letter on which station was their favorite and one new thing that they learned from the safety day. Once responses were compiled 90% of students responded that they had learned a new safety skill, that they thought would help them be safer while on the farm, in woodlands, near water, or at home. Also volunteers for the educational stations were surveyed. Surveys were recorded and 100% of volunteers wish to teach again, 93% feel that the lesson that they taught would help to make our community a safer place, with the remainder surveyed at a somewhat safer place.

### **Russell County Extension Agents and Staff**

4-H Youth Development	Christy A. Martin
Agriculture & Natural Resources	Jonathan Oakes
Family & Consumer Sciences	Megan Gullett
4-H/FCS Program Assistant	Sherri Coffey
Staff Assistant	Patricia Richards

### **Extension At a Glance**

- **230 People increased knowledge of farm health and safety practices**
- **93 People collected soil samples for testing**
- **1000 Pounds of food were provided to local non-profit organizations**
- **115 Farmers increased their knowledge of farm business planning and financial management skills**
- **21 Adults were reached through volunteers conducting Extension Programs and/or activities**
- **8 Extension programs/activities were conducted by volunteers**
- **24 Participants reported new leadership roles and leadership opportunities**
- **585 Youth and adults engaged in volunteer service in their communities through the 4-H program**
- **475 Youth and adults participated in a community-based service project**
- **217 Youth gained an understanding of ecosystems in Kentucky**
- **169 Youth were educated on health and well-being through 4-H programs**