

Issue 2023

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

KENTUCKY  KENTUCKY STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

UK MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT  
KSU COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY AND THE SCIENCES

# McCracken County

Photo by : WPSD-TV

For 2023, McCracken County residents submitted 354 soil samples for testing

Population of McCracken County : 67,490

McCracken County was the 78th county formed in the state

In 2023, 5,252 contacts were made with McCracken County residents who participated in nutrition education programming

McCracken County Extension Master Gardeners reported 700 volunteer hours

134 Youth attended 4-H Camp in Dawson Springs, Kentucky

# MEET THE AGENTS



***Mary Dossett***

HORTICULTURE



***Gracey Moffitt***

AGRICULTURE &  
NATURAL RESOURCES



***Lisa Dodson***

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



***Heather Hunter***

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



***Rachael Davis***

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



***Kelly Alsip***

FAMILY & CONSUMER  
SCIENCE

# MEET THE ASSISTANTS



***Savannah Gilbert***

HORTICULTURE ASSISTANT



***Stephanie Caldwell***

NEP PROGRAM  
ASSISTANT SENIOR



***Forrest Wynne***

KSU STATE EXTENSION  
SPECIALIST FOR  
AQUACULTURE





THE FUTURE IS YOUTH



## 4-H Youth Development

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### Youth Thrive at 4-H Camp

Camp provides an ideal setting for embracing beneficial challenges. This might involve the physical challenge of kayaking or scaling a climbing wall, or the emotional challenge of mingling with unfamiliar faces to make new friendships. Camp promotes an organic, tech-free experience. It encompasses crucial life skills that many young individuals seek, such as creativity, problem-solving, team management, and nurturing relationships. Activities like arts and crafts, rifle, archery, counselor training sessions, or simply crafting a friendship bracelet with fellow campers all contribute to honing these vital skills that are often missing in today's youth.

The Kentucky 4-H Camping program is dedicated to fostering an environment where youth steadily build confidence and self-worth through a series of small achievements at camp. Campers encounter individuals from diverse backgrounds, learning the importance of collaboration to address challenges. While many of today's youth regularly experience anxiety, camp introduces them to the thrilling side of life – embracing adventure!





The McCracken County Cooperative Extension Service's 4-H program facilitated a summer camp adventure, bringing together 150 participants, including both youth and adults, to West Kentucky 4-H Camp. A crucial component of this camping experience was the contribution of 25 adult and teenage volunteers who showcased leadership and responsibility as key members of the camp's leadership team.



During the 2023 Program Year, 17,652 individuals participated in Kentucky 4-H Summer Camp at one of our four camp facilities. The breakdown of attendance includes: 14,825 youth, 2,553 adult volunteers, and 274 extension staff. To breakdown attendance even further, of the 17,652 individuals: 9,638 were female, 8,014 were male, 292 were Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, 12,525 were white, 468 were black, 99 were Asian/Pacific Islander, 21 Native American Indian/Alaska Native, and 117 were Other.



Kentucky 4-H Camping's vision is to offer a secure setting for hands-on learning opportunities to residents of Kentucky and those beyond its borders. Its mission centers on enhancing individuals via deliberate life skill cultivation. This is achieved through:



- Partnering at local, state, and national levels,
- Employing research-driven approaches and programs,
- Adopting service-focused methods,
- Implementing forward-thinking strategic plans,
- And, importantly, incorporating play.

**AGRICULTURE**  
IS A FIELD OF  
**UNLIMITED**  
POSSIBILITIES





## Agriculture & Natural Resources

### Annual Free Seedling Giveaway

According to the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, planting trees provides a multitude of benefit to local ecosystems. These benefits include protecting soil from rill and sheet erosion, protecting water quality by filtering excess nutrients and chemicals from surface runoff, increasing infiltration rates, and providing long term wildlife habitats. In partnership with the McCracken County Soil Conservation District, McCracken County Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Samantha Anderson, hosted a free tree seedling giveaway open to all McCracken County residents. Hosted as a two-day event, three thousand seedlings were distributed at no cost to McCracken County residents. Variates distributed were selected based on local efficacy and included white oak, white pine and walnut. In addition to the seedlings, participants were provided with educational resources related to planting, soil testing and environmental factors to consider.

Participants described their apperception for the program and the services that the Cooperative Extension Service provides to the community. This annual partnership program resulted in community wide exposure to a variety of both new and nontraditional Cooperative Extension Service clientele.





TO PLANT  
A GARDEN  
IS TO BELIEVE  
IN TOMORROW



# Horticulture

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## Boy Scout Horticulture Badge

On Friday March 10th the horticulture agent instructed Troop 7 boy scouts on how to obtain their Horticulture merit badge. The class consisted of 10 boy scouts and six adults present. The horticulture agent started the class with a presentation on gardening basics such as how to start a garden, gardening glossary, how to maintain your garden, gardening risks, and how to start a compost bin. The horticulture merit badge requires the boy scouts to construct a compost bin and to keep one for 90 days. They also must grow six vegetables, three from seed and three from seedlings. Next, they must grow six flowers, three from seed and three from seedlings. Lastly, they must test 100 seeds for germination and determine how many germinated successfully. Another part of their requirements is to visit their local extension office, which is where the program was held. They must be able to tell their counselor how honeybees are used in pollinating crops and how their population is declining.



The first picture is the boy scouts with the Horticulture Agent and their new Extension hats. The second picture is two boy scouts creating their compost bins. The agent gave the boy scouts instructions on how many holes to drill and gave them the drills to get started. The older boy scouts helped the younger ones with drilling the holes. Great teamwork! The last picture is one of the boy scouts with his harvest from his garden!



## Herb Appeal

On July 27th, the McCracken County Extension Master Gardeners hosted the 8th Annual Herb Appeal luncheon at the McCracken County Extension Office. The speaker for the event was Ginny Hutson, owner of Frenchtown Station, on Frenchtown Urban Gardening. This luncheon is a fundraiser for the education of the gardening public.



The Master Gardeners prepare the luncheon featuring culinary herbs. The Herb of the Year for 2023 was ginger and the vegetable was lettuce. They incorporated both into the lunch. As the guests entered the room, they could socialize and shop the Garden Goodies table which had plants, planters, and education material for sale. Michael Vessels, Master Gardener, was also stationed at that table to answer any gardening questions that the public had. There were sixteen Master Gardeners that volunteered for the program and 70 people attended the luncheon.





## Flowering Dogwood Seedling Giveaway

On April 15th, The McCracken County Civic Beautification Board prepared and distributed 300 Flowering Dogwood tree seedlings to community members at Paducah's first Farmers' Market of the 2023 season. The seedlings were grown by the Kentucky Division of Forestry. It was a beautiful day with a great turnout, and everyone was excited to be able to take home a Dogwood tree of their own. Publications from the University of Kentucky were also provided with information on how to care for and maintain Flowering Dogwood trees. The McCracken County Civic Beautification Board is looking forward to giving away more seedlings to the community again this spring.



**Every time you eat  
is an opportunity  
to nourish your  
body**





# Family and Consumer Sciences

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## Laugh and Learn Playdates

Kentucky has reported that only 57% of children attending kindergarten in McCracken County are prepared and equipped to succeed, and Paducah Independent is at 47%. In many Kentucky counties, limited resources or the environment may hinder healthy lifestyle choices related to early childhood development and physical activity.

As an innovative strategy to improve early childhood development skills and increase kindergarten readiness with Paducah City, and McCracken County residents, the Family and Consumer Sciences Agent partnered with Paducah Public Library to implement Laugh and Learn Playdates once a month for the 2023 year.

Through this program, participants work on improving early childhood development skills and increasing kindergarten readiness. 40 adults and 54 children participated in this program. As a result of this program, 93 % of parents reported reading to their child(ren) at least three times a week, 98 % of parents or caregivers reported using simple rules and routines in their home, and 100% reported involving their child(ren) in play with other children. Regarding physical activity, 99 % of participants' parents or caregivers encouraged their child to continue in challenging tasks. In addition to individual behavior change 76% reported giving their child new opportunities to try new foods, and 81% reported their family conducted activities learned from Laugh and Learn Playdates at home.





# Canned to Cooked

## Local

A2

The Paducah Sun | Wednesday, January 10, 2024 | paducahsun.com

### Family Service Society hosting free 'Canned to Cooked' classes

BY SUN STAFF

Finding ways to cook nutritional meals that are also affordable can be a challenge. To help, Family Service Society is hosting Canned to Cooked classes each Tuesday in partnership with the University of Kentucky's McCracken County Cooperative Extension.

The first class was held Jan. 9 at Family Service Society. The free classes will be held at 10 a.m. every Tuesday through Feb. 20 at the non-profit, which is at 827 Joe Clifton Drive in Paducah.

Organizers said the classes offer an opportunity to learn new how to cook tasty, nutritious meals using canned foods and other pantry resources. Attendees also get a free meal.

The class is presented by McCracken County Cooperative

Extension Senior Nutrition Education Program Assistant Stephanie Caldwell, who shared what people can expect from the course.

"My program is a series of seven lessons and it's all about healthy eating," Caldwell said. "It's not a diet. It's normal people like you and me eating, just making better choices along the way."

In a Facebook post about the series, Family Service Society said people who attend four of the seven lessons can receive a \$25 gift card. Each household can only receive one gift card every 12 months. In a Facebook post of its own, the McCracken County Cooperative Extension said there will be door prizes and grocery giveaways at every class.

Family Service Society said in the event of inclement weather, classes will be canceled

when McCracken County Schools are closed.

The McCracken County Cooperative Extension said those who wish to reserve a seat in the classes can call 270-443-4838.



JASON THOMASON | The Sun

The Canned to Cooked classes will be held at 10 a.m. every Tuesday through Feb. 20 at the Family Service Society, which is at 827 Joe Clifton Drive in Paducah.



JASON THOMASON | The Sun

McCracken County Cooperative Extension Senior Nutrition Education Program Assistant Stephanie Caldwell leads a Canned to Cooked class at Family Service Society in Paducah in this Jan. 9 photo. The free classes offer an opportunity to learn new how to cook tasty, nutritious meals using canned foods and other pantry resources.





## KSU Extension

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### West KY Catfish Production Update

Three area producers are growing channel catfish in roughly 80 acres of ponds in western Kentucky. The average pond size is five acres. Currently, many area ponds are 20 years old or more and in need of renovation. Heavy clay soils erode from the 3:1 levee slopes and leave a thick layer of silt on pond bottom that interferes with the harvesting of fish by seining. Ponds are infrequently drained to conserve the well water used to fill them. Ponds under renovation are drained and out of production for a year. The average depth of ponds is approximately 5 feet.

Average yield for catfish per acre is about 5,000 lbs. Smaller, fingerling fish are understocked following the removal of larger fish by harvest seining. Harvested fish average about 2 lbs. each. A seine is used to harvest entire ponds and may be 700 feet or more in length. A live car or grader sock is used to retain larger fish while smaller fish escape through the larger mesh net of the live car. Catfish are loaded into a net basket with a door which is attached to the boom on a truck. An in-line scale weighs the fish, and the basket is emptied into aerated insulated tanks on a separate hauling truck. Fish are sold to live haulers that sell fish to fee-fishing operations or pay lakes in Kentucky and other states. Fish prices have been reported between \$1.30 - \$2.00 per lb. Fish are sold from February into November and harvested about once a week. Approximately 200,000 lbs. of fish were harvested in 2023.


Catfish are fed 28% protein floating feed pellets at a rate of about all the feed they will consume in a period 20 to 30 minutes. The extruded feed consists of plant protein and vitamins and minerals. Feeding averages about 75 lbs. per acre per day during the months of March through November. Catfish feed prices have been high at over \$500 per ton and about \$60 per ton shipping charge from the feed mill. Catfish convert feed at an estimated 2.4:1 ratio of feed to fish, in a multi batch fish stocking production. This stocking scenario allows harvestable size fish throughout much of the year.


# How can you get involved?

- Master Gardener Program
- Master Food Volunteer
- 4-H Club Leader
- Homemaker Clubs
- 4-H Summer Camp Volunteer
- 4-H Competitions
- McCracken County Civic Beautification Board
- Interracial Women's Group
- CEC Member



# Connect with us!

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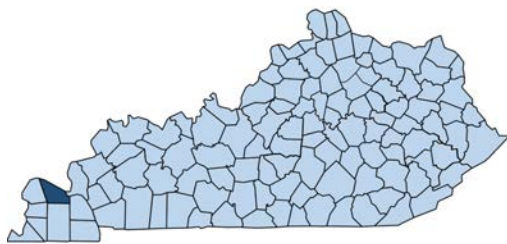
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# KENTUCKY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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## Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
4-H Youth Development  
Community and Economic Development

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