

University of Illinois Extension – 2009 Program Highlights

The Goal

Through educational programs University of Illinois Extension helps Illinois residents put knowledge to work to make life better, healthier, safer, and more profitable for individuals and their communities.

Program Reach and Delivery Methods

In 2009, Extension programs involved over 2,700,000 face-to-face teaching contacts with residents of all of Illinois' 102 counties – and far beyond. These contacts were made through nearly 17,000 teaching events.

In addition, total page views on Extension's websites numbered over 73 million. Over 350 unique websites, including 70 in Spanish and 4 in other languages are available to the public on a wide variety of topics. Examples of new websites added in 2009 include *Getting through Tough Financial Times*, *Responsible Pest Management for Retailers*, *Winter Storm References*, *Small Fruit Crops* and several other gardening related websites.

Educational outreach through the media included distribution of more than 10,000 news releases, as well as broadcasts of more than 1,100 radio programs and over 500 television programs. Distribution of newsletters on a variety of topics totaled nearly 1.3 million. Other program delivery methods included hands-on workshops, field days, self-paced tutorials, expanded audio- and video-conferencing, and podcasts.

Program Focus

In response to locally-identified needs, Extension draws on university-based research and partners with organizations, businesses, and groups to develop and deliver programs. A sample of Extension programs conducted in 2009 illustrating the broad areas of focus, the diversity of audiences, variety of delivery methods, and impact on participants follows.



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College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

Healthy Society

- *The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program* engaged 500,000 youth in activities that addressed healthy food choices and physical activity targeted at preventing childhood obesity.
- *Cook County's Urban Extension Horticulture Program* has developed over 150 community gardens over the past three years, each yielding between 500 and 1000 pounds of fresh nutritious food.
- *Youth Cooking Schools* reached 830 youth with over 70% increasing skills in following recipes, measuring ingredients, using a stove, or reading food labels.



Food Safety and Security

- Through *Food Safety Refresher Courses*, 348 individuals were recertified to serve food to the public—60% indicated they changed practices in monitoring food temperature.



- *Food safety multistate Extension conferences* enhanced 180 participants' knowledge of risks and related rules and regulations affecting the safe production, transportation, processing, and sales of locally grown and marketed food.

Environmental Stewardship

- Over 150 individuals were certified by Extension in detecting the spread of the *Emerald Ash Borer* which threatens an estimated 13 million Illinois Ash trees valued at \$9.1 million.
- Of the 3400 active Extension Master Gardeners who regularly provide information to the public, over 600 voluntarily reported increasing their use of environmentally friendly practices including choosing plant varieties that are pest resistant.
- Required plans for managing livestock facility manure to



prevent air and surface water are created and currently maintained by 448 producers on an Extension website

- Of the 460 landowners who attended *Wind Energy 101* workshops, 92% indicated that they found the information to be very useful in considering whether or not to pursue wind farm development.

Sustainable and Profitable Food Production & Marketing Systems

- To meet growing demands for food, over 1100 agricultural producers and consultants attended statewide Extension presentations that enhanced their knowledge of corn and soybean production strategies for an estimated 18.4 million acres.
- Youth (1300) engaged in raising livestock completed training and an examination to certify their knowledge of ethical and humane care of animals.
- A survey of practice changes completed by 1420 agricultural producers who had participated in *Pesticide Safety Education Programs* revealed that over 1200 now scout their crops to identify pests before determining if control is needed and take precautions to minimize spray drift that may harm nearby plants, animals, or humans.

Enhancing Youth, Family & Community Well-being

- Interviews with low-income individuals and family participants in a multi-session Extension curriculum, *Your Money and Your Life*, confirmed that 90% are doing a better job of budgeting and tracking expenses and that 60% have been able to save more money.
- Through presentations to teachers in 131 school districts over 500 increased their understanding of *social and emotional learning* and its important role in ensuring young people's success in school and life.
- *Illinois ResourceNet* education efforts assisted local officials and organizations to successfully procure more than \$3 million in federal grant funds to support various community projects.
- A survey of users of Extension's *Parenting 24/7 website* revealed that



90% of the 87 respondents claimed that the site helped them to understand their child's behavior and development.

- Some 1000 citizens participated in processes facilitated by Extension and designed to create *county disaster mitigation plans* required to secure funds to address future serious disasters such as floods.

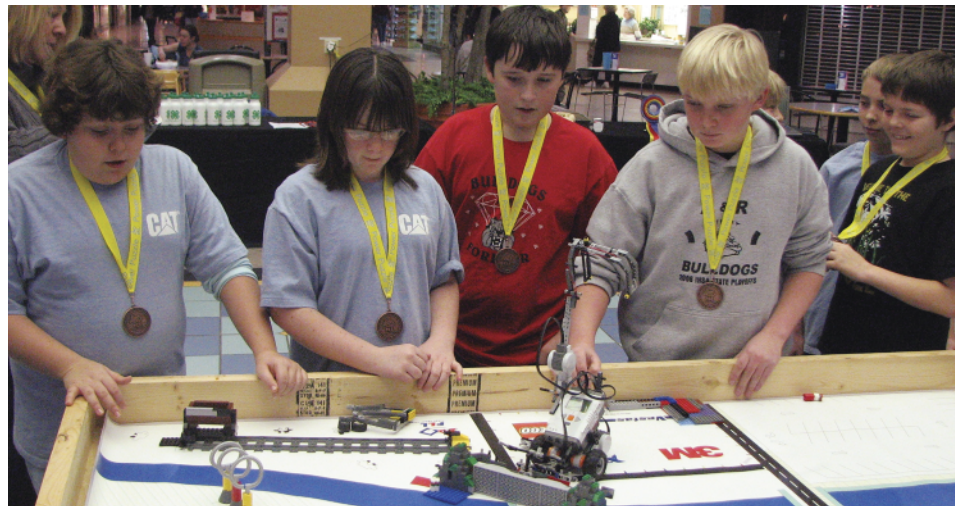
4-H Youth Development

University of Illinois Extension's 4-H Youth Development program assists youth in acquiring knowledge and developing life skills that will enable them to become caring, competent, and contributing



members of society. In 2009, over 268,000 youth participated in 4-H activities and programs. Some 23,000 Illinois youth and adult volunteer leaders worked with these youth. Special initiatives for 2009 focused on expanding *science, engineering, and technology experiences* for 4-H youth and included:

- Demonstrated knowledge and skills in *Robotics* by 100 youth through the State Fair project conference judging and team-focused 4-H State Robotics Challenge with the winning team placing second in the national 4-H Engineering Conference competition.
- Increased knowledge of health careers, science techniques, and interest in science-related careers by 50 *Science Siesta* youth participants through discussions with professionals and through lab experiences.
- Participation in a statewide *Biofuels Blast Experiment* with 95% of the 2300 plus youth indicating they would like to participate in future science experiments.
- Tours, simulations and experiments that focused on global warming and greenhouse gas reduction targeted increasing youth's recognition of the value and need for careers in science.



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Find more information about University of Illinois Extension programs at www.extension.illinois.edu

• University of Illinois • U.S. Department of Agriculture • Local Extension Councils Cooperating. University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Data reflects statistics for 2009. Published in April 2010