Thank you for reviewing the Annual Report which highlights the educational programming coordinated and conducted by the dedicated Unit volunteers and staff members. For 100 years, University of Illinois Extension has and will continue to bring knowledge and skill enhancement to benefit local people and communities.

University of Illinois Extension Unit Council members, Staff and I extend our appreciation for your support through funding, volunteer enrichment, program partnership and more. We look forward to continuing to help people improve their lives and communities through active partnership that put knowledge to work.

Pamela Jacobs
Interim County Extension Director

A very special Thank You to the volunteers who serve as Members of the Extension Council:

Bill Bathon  Gail Batteau
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Tara Davis    Mary Hamilton
Janel Kassing  Eddie Kerkover
Nicole Loyd  Jon McClurken
Becky McIntosh  Charlene Morris
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Denise Stearns  Bryan Stearns
Christy Walters  Jennifer Watson

A very special Thank You to the volunteers who serve as Members of the Extension Board:

Dan Bost  Christy Brower
Jane Chapman  James Engelhardt
Jim Epplin  Brent Gentry
Jo Levery  Alan Price
Mike Schmitz
This year, Unit 26 was chosen to pilot a cooking school and nutrition program funded by ConAgra. This program, 4-H Food Smart Families, is a partnership between 4-H/Youth Development and SNAP staff. The 4-H/Youth Development team in Unit 26 helped identify and train teens from our unit to be cooking school teachers. The teens then partnered with the SNAP staff to carry out cooking schools throughout the unit. In addition to ConAgra, Unit 26 would like to thank Evelyn Brandt Thomas who provided funding for local foods to be used in the summer cooking school program.

Goal Reached:
17—Teen Teachers;
10—Cooking Schools;
175—Youth Participants; and
300—Family Members Reached

Youth Education—Workforce Preparation

The youth educator reached 509 youth ages 6th-12th grade with the Welcome to the Real World Program. This program is an active, hands-on, real-life simulation that gives young people the opportunity to explore career opportunities and make lifestyle and spending choices similar to those adults face on a daily basis.

The 4-H Youth Development Educator, helped increase student confidence towards workforce preparation through the Welcome to the Real World program taught at the COPE Alternative School in Murphysboro. This new program audience, ages 16-18, had not given much thought to a career path and living on their own. The program includes sessions on career exploration and finance simulation. Two students began to take active interest in their skills, future job opportunities and the importance of education. During the simulation, they chose low skill type jobs then quickly learned that they could not live on the salary paid from those jobs. As the sessions continued, the two students excitedly reported to Instructor Bisel, that they had spent a significant amount of time out of class working through the entire financial simulation with different job options. They then explained how they understood the importance of achieving an education to acquire a job that they enjoyed and one that would cover their living expenses. Their eyes were opened to reality and a newfound determination. Instructor Bisel was excited for them and shared in the sense of accomplishment knowing that is why we teach programs such as Welcome to the Real World.
Youth Education—Hands on Science

4-H Splash 4-H Coordinators introduced 715 youth to 4-H through an engineering and hands-on series of science experiments. The Splash program excited youth about science and getting involved in their local 4-H program.

4-H Highlights

4-H National Youth Science Day—539 youth complete the Maps and Apps program exploring the world of GIS mapping and using mapping to solve community issues.

Science Programming—464 youth were involved in water quality, Eco Bots and various engineering based activities. 287 youth learned more about science through the available educational kits for classroom use.

Jackson County 4-H Highlights: Geocaching—A teen leader led 14 youth aged 5-13 in the geocaching around Murphysboro. Youth learned how to operate and read GIS devices and enjoyed hunting for the hidden caches. Down on the Farm—Youth learned facts about farm animals, how to shuck corn, make butter, ice cream. Jackson County 4-H Fair—a total of 240 project entries in 6 different shows.

Franklin County 4-H Highlights: I Think Green program, engaging youth in investigating how living things interact with each other and the environment; Focus on YOUth Teen Conference- Session presentation for youth on varying topics including Science experiments to how to prevent head injuries; Franklin County 4-H Fair—a total of 1,792 project entries in 15 different shows.

Perry County 4-H Highlights: 27th Annual 8th Grade Teen Conference with over 200 student attendees; Community Service Projects—Christmas shopping for 5-Star Industries Children’s Home and honoring Veterans by placing flags on graves at 3 different cemeteries; Perry County 4-H Fair—a total of 263 project entries in 5 different shows.

Randolph County 4-H Highlights: GIS Mapping—Water Meter Project, the 4-H Geobots in Sparta is one of three clubs nationally to receive an ESRI 40H ArcGIS computer software grant. The Geobots are working with the community to locate the GIS/GPS coordinates of water meters; Bicycle Rodeo and Safety Day—an opportunity for youth to learn proper skills/laws of a bike; Randolph County 4-H Fair— a total of 465 project entries in 7 different shows.

Williamson County 4-H Highlights: 4-H Shooting Sports program growing from 9 to over 40 members; Expansion of clubs to new communities; Williamson County 4-H Fair— a total of 136 project entries in 3 different shows.

Unit-Wide 4-H Events: Livestock Quiz Bowl; Showmanship Clinic and Unit 26 4-H members enjoyed a new experience by taking the train to Centralia then had a day of fun at the Community Recreation Center.
**Horticulture**

The goals of the horticulture program in Unit 26 are to educate the public on topics such as improvement and better management of landscapes, home food production, the natural environment as well as to provide science-based educational opportunities to achieve their personal goals.

The Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists are trained volunteers who extend the educational outreach of the University of Illinois Extension. They also help adults and children experience nature and gardening while expanding their knowledge and skills.

Horticulture Workshop—Throughout the year, outreach continues with the 4-Seasons Gardening series offered by Extension Educators as well as public speaking engagements at Garden Centers, Gardening Clubs and local organization meetings. Educator Lallemand assisted with work on a blighted area in the city of Carbondale by designing “gardens” using southern Illinois native plants.

**Master Gardener**

The Master Gardener training program added new Master Gardener trainees in Franklin, Jackson, Perry and Williamson counties. With this increase, Master Gardeners expanded horticulture outreach and programs by participating in the Home & Garden Show in Sparta, Du Quoin, at the Fort de Chartres Rendezvous. At Mandala Gardens, Master Gardeners in Williamson County participated in the Marion Garden Tour. They also offered their expert advice at clinics held at local stores. With their participation at the Du Quoin State Fair and a combined total of their activities, Master Gardeners reached over 2,000 individuals.

A telephone call in “Hot Line” began in Williamson County. This public service allows gardeners and non-gardeners alike from the community, to bring in plant samples and receive helpful information from a Master Gardener.

**Master Naturalist**

The program, now in its second year, graduated 30 new interns in May 2014. Master Naturalists have supported events at the Cache River Wetland Center, Crab Orchard Wildlife Refuge and Giant City Park; and conducted children’s events at various venues and led guided hikes with the US Forest Service in the Shawnee National Forest and with IDNR at the Cache Wetland Center and Giant City Park. The volunteers continue to assist at Park visitor centers as well as participate in natural surveys and invasive species assessments.

**Goods From Your Woods**

Good from your Woods workshop in late winter offered educational programs to landowners on oak timber production and finished products: veneer and wine casks. The program helps to connect landowners with timber stand to learn more of what is needed to produce high quality oak logs. The topics addressed oak forest regeneration and proper management, growing and selling high quality timber, timberland management programs, wine barrel production and the connection between the white oak and wine.
**Elderberry Mentoring Workshop**

The first Elderberry Mentoring Workshop was held in Red Bud at an elderberry producing farm and covered all aspects of growing and harvesting Elderberries for market. Growers new to elderberry cultivation had a unique opportunity to learn from our neighbors to the west where elderberry research has been ongoing since 1997. The release of selected cultivars and research in best horticultural practices in Missouri have facilitated the development of a very strong industry that is adaptable to small, as well as large farms. This first workshop was followed by a harvest workshop in the summer to help further the knowledge of Illinois producers developing elderberry producing industries.

**Illinois Grape Growers Association (IGGVA)**

The IGGVA programs for the southern region workshops addressed the needs of the grape growers of the region. Monthly educational meetings from February to June, as well as some fun in the process, aimed to educate grape growers on all aspects of vineyard management to achieve quality grape production in southern Illinois. These meetings were attended by current and prospective grape growers, and hobbyists wine producers.

**Southern Illinois Indigenous Plant Symposium**

In collaboration with the Illinois Native Plant Society and Southern Illinois University-Department of Plant Biology, the second Illinois Indigenous Plant Symposium was held at John A. Logan College on March 21-23, 2014. The symposium started on Friday with a hike at Rocky Bluff led by Chris Evans of the Illinois Native Plant Society-Southern Chapter. Participants discovered the beauty of the ephemeral spring plants and learned about the environment suitable for these plants. On Saturday, the Symposium opened with keynote speaker Dr. Michael Jefford’s “A Lifetime of Curiosities”. Participants enjoyed the day-long workshops Celebrating Forests and Wetland in Southern Illinois. On Sunday, another hike led by Chris Evans took 18 participants to Round Bluff. Sponsors included Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Pizzo and Associates.
Local Food Systems and Small Farms

The Local Food Systems Small Farms Program strives to provide practical research and experience based information to local growers including information on production practices, marketing, and food safety. Programming is mainly geared towards individual that are producing grain, livestock, fruits or vegetables for marketing locally and regionally. This past year has been full of many new activities that have been a part of this educational effort!

Ewing Demonstration Center

The Ewing Demonstration Center is a 20 acre research and demonstration center managed and supported by the University of Illinois Extension in northeastern Franklin County. The center, originally established in 1910, has a rich history of research and education which continues today including a focus on no-till production, cover crops, agronomic crop production and also horticultural crop production, especially on pumpkin production this past year. The number of field days at the center increased from 1 per year to 4 field days this past season, including cover crop, agronomic crops, and pumpkins involving over 300 participants.

One of the greatest successes was the 2014 Pumpkin Field Day held on September 4, 2014 with over 100 in attendance for this day-long, field program. Field day demonstrations and presentations included variety selection, pest management, cover crops and no-till production. Feedback from everyone was extremely positive about the event. There were growers from all across the state and also from neighboring Indiana and Missouri in attendance and industry representatives from all across the Midwest and from as far away as Maine. This was the first time the annual Pumpkin Field Day was held at the Ewing Demonstration Center and this was great publicity for the center and for Extension in the region, with coverage in print, radio, and television.
The new demonstration high tunnel at the Jackson County Extension Office has been the center of many educational programs throughout the last year. This has been the establishment year for the tunnel in which it has been an educational opportunity for many to learn the challenges of constructing a high tunnel.

Three workshops were conducted with the high tunnel in the past year. First was our High Tunnel Construction Workshop. Everyone got to share in the task of covering the high tunnel with plastic and learn about high tunnel construction practices. At the Soil Management Workshop, soil preparation for production was highlighted by a demonstration and presentation by Jeff Kindhart on soil steaming. In late summer, a workshop was conducted on high tunnel layout and fall/winter vegetable production.

The high tunnel has been a great learning and educational resource for over 100 participants this year. In addition to the above workshops, the high tunnel has been as a learning tool for SIU horticulture students. Extension staff are experimenting with different crops and varieties to collect information to help local growers with new ideas on how to make better use of high tunnels in their small farm operations, citing these observations in local programs and also in the Illinois Fruit and Vegetable Newsletter.

**Getting Started in Asparagus Workshop**

May 9, 2014 the University of Illinois Extension hosted the Getting Started in Asparagus Workshop held at the Jackson County Extension Office. This was an in-field workshop where Extension Educators discussed the considerations to make when establishing an asparagus planting and maintenance of asparagus after it is planted. Approximately 35 were in attendance some from as far as Springfield, IL. There was a great deal of positive feedback with appreciation for the hands on aspect of the program and supported interest in future programs on this topic. The program included visiting the newly established Asparagus Variety Trial on the grounds of the office. This trial was established in collaboration between Nathan Johanning, Extension Educator and Dr. Alan Walters Vegetable Scientist at SIU. There is no recent Midwestern data available on the performance of new asparagus varieties which will make this data collection of great benefit to promote asparagus production in Illinois!

Other Local Food System/Small Farms programs that have occurred throughout the past year include: Cover Crop Field Tour for Fruit and Vegetable Crops, Southern Illinois Twilight Series Meetings, Good Agricultural Practices Training, Pond Management Workshop, Small Farms Webinar Series, Beginning Farmer Program, and Pumpkin Workshop among many others!
Randolph and Perry County Highlights:

*Using the Snap-Ed walk-by guides to provide education to the client of the WEEOC Food Pantries in Perry and Randolph Counties, Over 600 clients were contacted. Clients learned about increasing physical activity and increasing the intake of fruits and vegetables in their diets. Also provided were proven methods on how to use their commodity foods wisely while creating healthy, complete meals for the entire family.

*75 WIC clients in Perry County and 55 Family Community Resource Center clients in Randolph learned to plan, shop and prepare family meals in a health manner using the “Loving Your Family, Feeding Their Future” series and the “Eat Smart, Be Active” curriculum,

*Using the “Eat Smart, Live Strong” series, 15 senior adults from the Sparta Senior Center learned how to improve their well-being through a healthy lifestyle and getting the proper amounts of fruits and vegetables.

*Community Resource Fair at the Sparta Senior Center, where 40 participants learned easy ways to add fruits and vegetables to classic meals through the “Eat Smart, Live Strong” series.

*100 Kindergarten aged and 40 Pre-school aged children in Perry County learned principles of healthy eating and exercising via the OrganWise Guys curriculum.

*25 Head Start parents in Randolph County were educated on healthy eating while staying within a limited budget through the “East Smart, Be Active” series.

*Three 4-H Food Smart Families cooking schools were held in Du Quoin and Pinckneyville utilizing 4 teen teachers. 29 youth participated in various physical activities and completed recipes highlighting different sections of the MyPlate food model.

*98 Students in the Coulterville Elementary school participated in the Food Power Program, walking through an interactive display containing whole grains, dairy, fruits and vegetables, as well as physical activity stations.

*10 clients from the Perry County Health Department were escorted to the Farmer’s Market to discuss seasonal fruits and vegetables and use of WIC coupons exclusive for use on Farmer’s Market produce.

Williamson County Highlights:

*Pre-K and Head Start venues received “It Is Fun to Be Healthy” and “Scrub Club” curriculum

*OrganWise Guys curriculum was presented to North Side Primary in Herrin

*Nutrition Education and Cooking skills were offered to local agencies. Monthly cooking classes were offered to Head Start parents to teach participants how to use their food dollars wisely, select healthy foods for their families, prepare and store food safely and balance food intake with physical activity.
Jackson County Highlights:

*Several schools participated in the OrganWise Guys programs for grades K-2: DeSoto Elementary (73 children); Elverado Elementary (97 children); General John A Logan Elementary (81 children); Shawnee Elementary (31 children); Thomas Elementary (140 children); Trico Elementary (171 children) and Unity Point Elementary (105 children).

*102 children in the Elverado Elementary School were reached using the Food Power Program.

*Three sites hosted the Pre-K program, “It’s Fun To Be Healthy”: Unity Point (66 children, 66 adult indirect contacts); McElvain Early Learning Center (60 children, 60 adult indirect contacts) and Carbondale Head Start (157 children, 157 adult indirect contacts).

*Conducted a Health Fair at Elverado Pre-K reaching 52 children

*The Boys and Girls Club of Carbondale and Evergreen Terrace in Carbondale participated in the ConAgra Cooking School with 30 children attending each program.

*Adult groups utilizing the “Easting Smart: Being Active” curriculum included: McElvain Early Learning Center (15 adults); S.T.A.R.T. Program in Murphysboro (38 adults); Family Community Resource Center (102 adults) and Carbondale Towers (15 adults).

*Walk By Groups that included several different topics on subjects such as Food Safety, Meal Planning, Seasonal Fruits and Vegetables, Grains, Health Breakfasts, and Seasoning included: Family Community Resource Center (150 adults); Carbondale Towers (20 adults); WIC in Murphysboro (100 adults); Murphysboro Food Pantry (152 adults); Good Samaritan Food Pantry, Carbondale (108 adults); Kroger, Murphysboro (110 adults) and Schnucks, Carbondale (85 adults).

Franklin County Highlights:

*OrganWise Guys curriculum is used and offered to schools that have greater than 50% free and reduced lunch participation. Schools included Benton, Christopher, Denning in West Frankfort and Ewing.

*Nutrition Education and Cooking Skills were offered to local agencies that serve low income parents/adults. “Loving Your Family, Feeding Their Future and Eating Smart Being Active” curriculum was used.

*Food Power Program—students in West Frankfort and Sesser visited 8 stations in the following order: Farm, Packaging, Hand-Washing, Cafeteria, Mouth, Stomach/Small Intestine, Muscle and Bone. This program is planned for Ewing, Akin and Thompsonville in the early spring.

*Approximately 12 Head Start and Pre-K classrooms received nutrition information.
Interim County Director
Pamela Jacobs

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All offices close during the lunch hour, 12:00 p.m. through 1:00 p.m.