

EXTENSION *Today*

TACKLING KENTUCKY'S HEALTH PROBLEMS

KAY WILSON of Gallatin County figured when it comes to health and weight management, two helpings are better than one. That's why she enrolled in both *Weight: The Reality Series* and *Get Moving Kentucky!* when they were offered by Rosie Allen, Extension agent for family and consumer sciences in Gallatin County.

"I found both programs very encouraging," Wilson said. She is one of many people across Kentucky who have found the programs valuable.

That may be because both of them take a realistic and comprehensive approach to weight loss and physical activity. And, because both are Extension programs, they are also based on research and can be customized to what will work in a particular community.

Weight: The Reality Series

Weight: The Reality Series was first offered in early 2004. The 10-week program now is available in every county in the state. It is a new approach to weight management.

"Most programs focus on restricting food and increasing exercise," said Janet Tietyen, Extension specialist in food and nutrition. "They don't rely on what research shows about how to help people change behaviors and reshape their lifestyle."

Participants in the program learn as much about goal setting and self-monitoring as they do nutrition and physical activity.

Wilson found that she's "more aware of portions—what a real portion of cheese is, or a real portion of mashed potatoes."

Get Moving Kentucky!

Eighty-four of Kentucky's counties have reported the local impact of *Get Moving Kentucky!*, an eight-week program that helps people make physical activity a habit.

"The program is unique because all audiences can use it, regardless of age, gender, or socio-economic class," said Lori Rice, program coordinator for Health Education through Extension Leadership (HEEL).

Get Moving Kentucky! is simple and flexible. Participants chart their

activity using a unit called a "PAM" (Physical Activity Mile). Each PAM equals 15 minutes of physical activity.

Any kind of activity, from housework to walking to gardening, counts as a PAM. The goal is to log 105 PAMs over the eight weeks of the program, which comes out to about 30 minutes of activity a day.

Wilson said that after taking part in *Get Moving Kentucky!*, she tries to be more active than she was before. "I try to walk instead of drive to the barn," she said.

Both programs are part of a larger effort in the School of Human Environmental Sciences called the Healthy Weight Task Force. The task force is pulling together Cooperative Extension specialists and agents, researchers, and teaching faculty to help Kentuckians move toward a healthier weight.



Walking Away the Pounds in Gallatin County—From the left are Rose Ayres, Cindy Sullivan, Ann Beach, Kay Wilson (quoted in the story), Tere Gettelfinger, Laverne Johns, and Vicky Georgeive. They all took part in Extension programming to help manage weight and increase physical activity.

FROM ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH

Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service programs are locally defined and administered. Here are a few examples of county Extension programs that are making a difference in people's lives.

■ Beef Festival in Mercer County

More than 4,000 people attended the first-ever Fort Harrod Beef Festival to celebrate the county's growing beef industry. About a year and a half ago, a committee of county leaders identified a beef festival as a community development program. Mercer County Cooperative Extension Service agents coordinated the planning meetings for the three-day event. The hugely successful festival include a parade of beef animals, a beef grill-off competition, and activities for 4-H'ers and FFA members.

■ Preventing Skin Cancer in Northern Kentucky

Sensational Skin sessions were organized by agents at the Gallatin County Cooperative Extension Service and presented across Northern Kentucky. More than 200 people

attended the sessions, where they learned about the importance of protecting skin from the sun to help prevent skin cancers. A survey sent to those attending showed a 55 percent increase in the number of participants who safeguard their skin with sunscreen or protective clothing.

■ Working for Progress in Muhlenberg County

Muhlenberg County Cooperative Extension agents, along with the county Chamber of Commerce, formed a business retention and expansion committee to improve the county's economic prospects. Working with Extension specialists from the University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University, committee members interviewed 38 local businesses to assess strengths and weaknesses of the community's business climate. Findings were to be reported to community leaders this summer.

■ Sharing Farm Equipment in Harrison County

To help improve local beef production, the Harrison County Cooperative Extension Service and the Harrison County Beef Cattle Association worked together to purchase and offer farmers, for a small rental fee, equipment including no-till seeders, livestock chutes and panels, and weed sprayers. After two years, the program has accumulated \$20,000 in fees that will be used for equipment replacement and new purchases.

■ Growing Vegetables in Hopkins County

A two-acre vegetable garden was planted at the Hopkins County Jail to help feed more than 400 inmates and jail workers. Agents of the Hopkins County Cooperative Extension Service assisted in soil analysis, plot layout, cultivar selection, and insect and disease control. Total cost for seed, fertilizer, pesticides, and equipment came to less than \$400, but the return in produce was estimated to be between \$15,000 and \$21,000. Inmates gained experience in vegetable gardening. Plans are to double the size of the garden next year.

■ Education Pays in Todd County

The Todd County Cooperative Extension Service mounted an aggressive program to teach farmers about soybean rust. Working with University of Kentucky plant pathologists, local agents explained the disease and how a sentinel plot would help alert farmers to the possibility of infection in time for them to take measures to protect their crops. As a result, most soybean farmers did not use unnecessary fungicide treatments, and that resulted in estimated savings of between \$200,000 and \$300,000.

■ Boyle County 4-H Teaches to the Core

Local 4-H leaders in Boyle County asked the agents of the Boyle County Cooperative Extension Service to increase the number of youths involved in 4-H

in classrooms by providing lessons consistent with the Kentucky Department of Education's Core Content for Assessment.

As a result, the agents and leaders, in cooperation with local teachers, created 21 classroom clubs in the Danville, Boyle County, and Danville Christian systems. The lessons started with first and second graders learning about healthy diets and advanced to include basic science and practical living skills. Eighty-six percent of fourth graders correctly characterized the water cycle; 52 percent of them could identify three sizes of soil particles; and 97 percent of fifth graders could identify healthier cereal options.

■ Focusing on Land Use in Nelson County

A survey of Nelson County farmers found that 98 percent of respondents were very concerned about urban encroachment. As a result, the Nelson County Cooperative Extension Service organized and presented educational meetings, first in 2004, with 48 farmers attending, and again in 2006, with 107 farmers, developers, real estate agents, and civic leaders attending. A survey of attendees found that 72 percent reported a greater understanding of land use issues and zoning laws.

■ Avoiding ATV Accidents in Owsley, Lee, and Wolfe Counties

Due to the large increase in the popularity of all-terrain vehicles, many more people in Kentucky are being injured and killed in ATV accidents. The Owsley County Extension Council asked for education concerning ATV use. As a result, the Cooperative Extension Services of Owsley, Lee, and Wolfe counties provided instruction about ATV safety to all 4-H campers from these counties—more than 175 junior and high school students.

■ Parent-Child Literacy in Carroll County

To help local students excel in school, the Carroll County Cooperative Extension Service planned and delivered a parent-child literacy program called "Be a Hero, Read with your Child." The two-part program encouraged parents to read to children from infancy. More than 80 parents and children attended the program. Of those, more than 95 percent indicated they planned to use hands-on materials with their children, and 90 percent learned about selecting age-appropriate reading materials.

■ Appreciating Home in Bell County

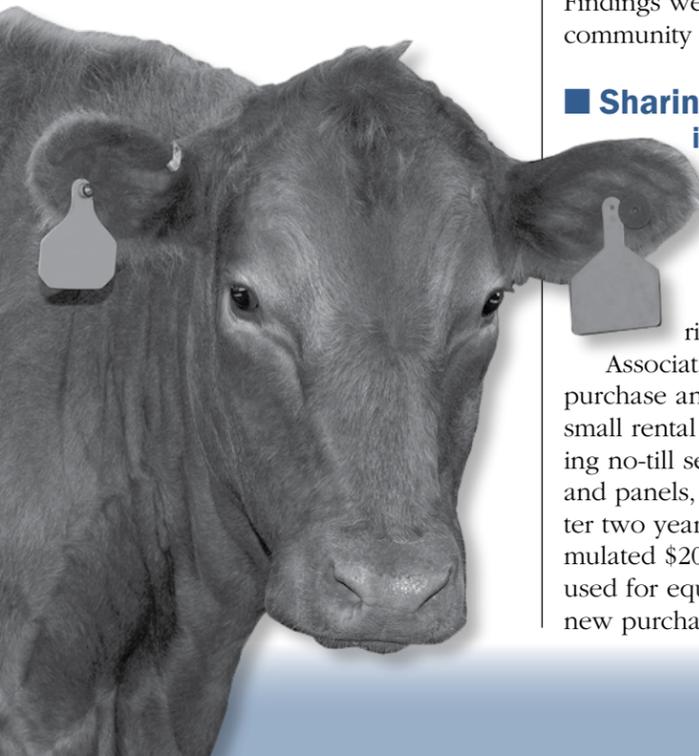
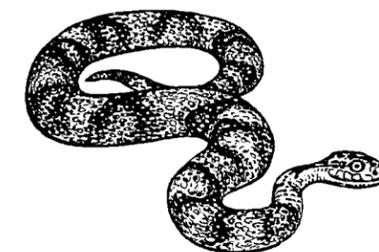
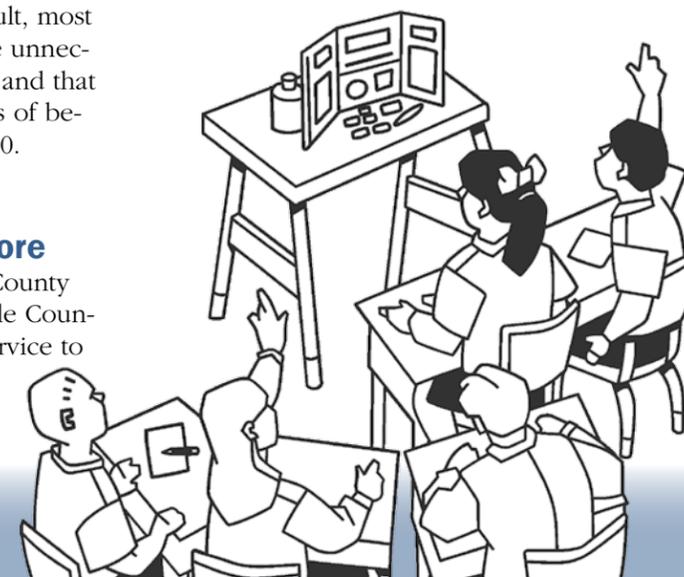
Bell County Cooperative Extension Service agents launched the program "Our Appalachia" to increase awareness of the positive aspects of growing up in Appalachia. More than 250 eighth grade students completed the six-lesson program, and of those, 80 percent showed a significant increase in knowledge and favorable opinions about Appalachia.

■ Reducing Illegal Drug Use in Monroe County

The Monroe County Cooperative Extension Service worked with the county's special drug court and LifeSkills treatment center to provide, in a group therapy setting, guidance, insight, and education to those convicted of illegal drug use. The impact has been dramatic. Studies show that recidivism rates for Monroe Countians who do not complete the series is just under 60 percent; the rate for those who complete the program is 20 percent.

■ Snakes and Skinks in Fayette County

Working with East Kentucky Power Energy Cooperative, the Fayette County Cooperative Extension Service implemented a program in local schools to give youngsters a chance to see and handle some Kentucky native reptiles and amphibians, including snakes and skinks—lizards that can regrow their tails. Nearly 400 students learned about the subject—and of those, 78 percent had a first-time, hands-on experience with the creatures.



Dr. Larry Turner wrote the column below not too long before he died in the tragic crash of Flight 5191 on August 27. After long and careful consideration, we decided to proceed with the column as written. Of course, this column summarizes Dr. Turner's views on Extension's role in a topic about which he cared deeply. But more importantly, it offers a powerful reminder of his faith in, and commitment to, Cooperative Extension and the people we serve. With the deepest respect for Larry Turner, we wanted to share this column with you.

—Scott Smith, Dean, College of Agriculture

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN HEALTH, NUTRITION, AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Commonwealth of Kentucky is noted for some things for which we would just as soon not be recognized. One of them is the level of obesity in the state. By several independent measures, we are in the top 10 states in adult and childhood obesity. Fortunately, we are not in the top five—but we are close, according to some studies.

The Cooperative Extension Service is playing a key role in addressing this problem and related issues of health, nutrition, and physical activity. Through programs like those described on Page 1 of this publication —*Weight: The Reality Series* and *Get Moving Kentucky!*—our faculty, specialists, and agents are developing and conducting programs that are making an impact and improving quality of life for Kentuckians.

One of the benefits of Cooperative Extension educational programming is that we have a strong con-

nection to research-based information. Through partnerships with UK campus experts in areas including medicine, health/wellness, nutrition, and exercise physiology, we have developed sound, research-based programs. Our agents know the people they serve and are experienced in delivering research-based educational programs in a way that will be effective locally. Extension agents partner with key local experts to enhance and tailor these programs to the specific needs of counties and communities.

Development of any Extension program starts with identification of issues that are important locally. A team of educators and researchers then identifies components of a statewide program that are needed to meet specific objectives—in this case improved health, reduced weight, and increased physical activity. Both of the programs featured

in this issue were designed to take advantage of the wealth of expertise at UK, but also to make sure they would be effective locally. As noted, these programs are being conducted across Kentucky. In the past fiscal year, over 107,000 Kentuckians took steps to improve their health through Cooperative Extension programs. We know that we are making progress in improving health and activity of Kentuckians, and we are pleased that Cooperative Extension is involved in connecting campus and community resources through programs such as *Weight: The Reality Series* and *Get Moving Kentucky!*

Kentucky Cooperative Extension is truly committed to conducting educational programs that make a difference, through which Cooperative Extension can enhance quality of life for all Kentuckians.

—LARRY W. TURNER, *Director
Cooperative Extension Service*

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