In 2014, we celebrated the 100 year anniversary of the signing of the Smith-Lever Act, which established the Cooperative Extension Service, a unique educational partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the nation’s 72 land-grant universities that extends research-based knowledge through a state-by-state network of extension educators.

In Maryland, the University of Maryland Extension (UME) operates through the University of Maryland at College Park, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. UME has field offices in all twenty-three Maryland counties and Baltimore City.

University of Maryland Extension works to provide “solutions in your community” through key program areas including agriculture, environment and natural resources, 4-H youth development, food and nutrition, health and wellness, financial planning, home gardening and the Chesapeake Bay. These research based programs and services are available to all residents of Talbot County thanks to the tremendous support of our community members, local organizations, volunteers and our County Council. Programming is made possible through partnerships between local, state and federal governments.

Thank you to the residents of Talbot County for celebrating this milestone with us. We look forward to what the next 100 years holds. We hope that you enjoy this 2014 report that highlights how UME’s educational outreach impacts the lives of Talbot County residents.
As population and development grows, Talbot UME continues to provide valuable environmental education, community outreach, volunteer participation, and demonstrations for the county. With approximately 600 miles of shoreline, Talbot County has an abundant amount of waterfront property. Talbot UME continues to educate for more environmentally sustainable lawns and landscapes, as well as promote native habitat.

**MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM**

Talbot County Master Gardeners are both residents and volunteers of the community, educated in horticulture to share with their fellow citizens. Talbot, Queen Anne’s, and Dorchester County train new volunteers annually using University faculty and staff. As part of their volunteer agreement, they serve a minimum of 20 hours per year, and 10 hours of continuing education.

**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

Master Gardeners offer educational opportunities at several community events for both adults and children, such as Pickering Creek Harvest Hoedown, Earth Day at Phillips Wharf Environmental Center, and the Waterfowl Festival in downtown Easton. With over 650 visitors to these events, Extension shares our programs, information, and other outreach opportunities. Master Gardeners also head the Bay-Wise program, which provides an unbiased landscape assessment for property owners. In 2014, we provided 6 home consultations and 2 certifications. The Bay-Wise program focuses on practices in urban and rural landscapes to promote healthy waterways. We also have a number of demonstration locations, where we showcase examples of rain gardens, native plantings, and proper practices for dealing with storm water. Sites are located within the county, and include the Talbot County Extension Office, Talbot County Agriculture Center, Oxford Community Garden, and Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

UME advises local residents with plant clinics, “Ask a Master Gardener” program, phone calls, personal meetings, and emails on a case-by-case basis. There were 121 cases brought to the Extension office dealing with home and garden issues, insect, and plant disease identification. Annual lecture series are established that are free and open to the public, for education regarding soil nutrition, winter gardening, healthy practices, landscape design principles, proper scientific resources, herbs and kitchen gardens, plus more. These are available through partnering with Brooklett’s Senior Center for Cabin Fever Reliever series, and through Institute for Adult Learning at Chesapeake College. Starting in spring of 2014, the Master Gardener Interns from 2013 have been heading efforts at The Pines rehabilitation center in Easton to provide participants with therapeutic horticulture. Twice a month, Master Gardeners visit residents with activities that are both educational and stimulatory to the senses.
4-H Youth Development

4-H is open to all youth ages 5 through 18. Extension personnel and volunteers plan and carry out learning experiences that supplement content learned in school. Participation in 4-H helps members develop skills including communication and leadership. 4-H strives to reach new, diverse, and underserved populations. All 4-H programs incorporate the essential elements of youth development: mastery (Head), belonging (Heart), service (Hands), and independence (Health).

2,759 youth served through Talbot County 4-H Programs

135 youth enrolled in 4-H community and special interest clubs

1,424 participated in school and community programs.

More than 1,200 teaching contacts served via outreach programs reached diverse youth including members of low-income families and children of Guatemalan immigrants.

Science Literacy Education

Although science and technology are playing an ever-increasing role in our lives, studies show that science literacy of U.S. residents is declining. In coming years, our country may not produce enough qualified applicants for science jobs. To address this need, 4-H offers programs that improve science literacy and generate interest in science careers.

4-H health career programs enabled teens from the Mid-Shore to interact with medical professionals and explore local health care career fields. By forming partnerships with other agencies and the public school system, 4-H created opportunities for high school students to investigate career sectors including agriculture, environmental science, and engineering. 4-H environmental science enrichment programs reached more than 1,000 participants and helped them learn strategies for conserving resources and improving Chesapeake Bay water quality.

Healthy Living Education

Poor nutrition and preventable accidents are major causes of illness and injury among Maryland residents. UME 4-H programs empower youth to make healthy food choices, stay fit, and engage in positive, safe activities.

4-H made 1,920 nutrition and fitness teaching contacts by delivering 4-H curriculum at after-school programs, low-income communities, and community events. Youth and adult volunteers provided teaching support and allowed 4-H to expand its reach and offer programs in under-served areas.

Healthy Living programs were expanded to get entire families involved in nutrition education through take-home lessons and family visits at program sites. Highlights included establishment of a community garden that will grow fresh produce and creation of opportunities for youth to teach others about nutrition.

654 youth learned strategies for preventing and correcting safety hazards posed by household chemicals, electricity, threats to hearing and vision, and other factors. These strategies can help families reduce their risk of injuries.
Food Supplement Nutrition Education (FSNE) Program

FSNE is a federally funded program that provides educational services in Talbot County. FSNE offers nutrition education to help Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households and those eligible for SNAP. FSNE programs are provided at no cost to support the work of community agencies serving SNAP-eligible individuals and families.

2014 Community Partners include:
- Magnolia Meadow
- Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center
- Head Start at the Family Support Center
- Talbot County Judy Center
- Mid Shore Early Learning Center
- Talbot County Childcare Association

**FSNE Adult Program Impacts:** In 2014, 17 adults and 43 teachers/collaborators received FSNE programming. Of those individuals, 141 contacts were made during the course of the education sessions.

**FSNE Youth Program Impacts:** In 2014, FSNE reached 97 Talbot County youth totaling 945 contacts.

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SEA GRANT

The Regional Watershed Restoration Specialists organize and hold a variety of educational programs for the Mid and Upper-Eastern Shore related to the University of Maryland Extension’s Sea Grant Program and serve as part of the Watershed Protection and Restoration Program. The Specialists provide educational programs focused on helping local and county governments and watershed groups to plan, develop, implement, and monitor projects and programs that lead to quantifiable reductions in nonpoint sources of pollution as outlined in various Watershed Implementation Plans. They serve as a critical interface between communities and other sources of knowledge and aid in building local capacity.

Talbot County is one of 3 counties serving as a test-bed for the SMART (Stormwater Management and Restoration Tracker) Tool which will be used to help homeowners record the installation of voluntary best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater. In partnership with the Phillips Wharf Environmental Center on Tilghman Island, the Specialists assisted with project identification and capacity building and provided stormwater technical assistance upon request to local municipalities and communities. Additionally, the Specialists coordinated and provided teacher professional development.

PHOTO: Regional Watershed Restoration Specialists worked with fellow Sea Grant Programs and with local nonprofit partners on teacher professional development. Shown here, teachers are on-site at Environmental Concern in St. Michaels, learning about wetland and rain garden programs for schools.
Nutrient Management

Maryland farmers are required to have a nutrient management plan if they have 8 or more animals or earn over $2,500 from the farm. Nutrient Management Plans were written for 68 Talbot County cooperators who required 372 plans that totaled 28,150 acres (30.3% of harvested cropland). The value to the farm community is approximately $126,675.00.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Agriculture and Natural Resources continue to be the foundation of Talbot County’s economy, rural character and rich history. Talbot UME provides outreach and research based information and education for agriculture production and farming.

Talbot County Corn Club – Acknowledged as the oldest continuous corn club in the country, the Talbot County Corn Club’s 63rd year hosted 23 adult participants and 8 youth participants. The goals of the club include increased production, yield and profitability. The average yields for entries were 227 bu/ac while the Maryland average was 171 bu/ac.

MidAtlantic Women in Agriculture - delivered risk and farm management training to women in the region through a variety of learning environments. In 2014, the program reached 1,721 participants.

179 Regional Women in Ag Conference

42 Annie’s Project Graduates

241 Webinar Participants

25 Farm Tour Participants

584 Newsletter Recipients

650 Social Media Followers

Beginning Farmers - The Maryland Collaborative for Beginning Farmer Success will increase the number of successful beginning farmers and acreage farmed in Maryland, with an emphasis on practical training for beginning farmers. Activities for this project include education, mentoring and apprenticeships for beginning farmers to explore, develop, refine and implement knowledge and skills. Highlights from 2014 include:

Reached 1,243 beginning farmers through face-to-face meetings, workshops, and conferences.

More than 11,000 (nearly 7,000 more than last year) and web/video views of over 1,200.

Developed 16 mentor relations and 13 on-farm apprenticeships.

As a result of this project, participants increased business knowledge by 74% and crop knowledge by 88%. Participants were then asked if they would take action as a result of the program. 82% plan to implement business actions and 92% plan to implement crop actions.
Talbot County Extension Advisory Council

The Talbot County Extension offices strive to respond to local needs. One mechanism for doing so is through the Talbot County Extension Advisory Council. The following individuals from the community served as members of the 2014 Extension Advisory Council:

Susan Behrens  
4-H Volunteer/Club Leader Livestock/Master Gardener

Eddie Boyle  
Talbot County Farm Bureau, President

Raymond Harrison, Jr.  
EAC President  
Talbot County Farmer

Laura Heikes  
Talbot County Farmer

Henry Leonard, CPA  
EAC Treasurer

Samantha Pitts  
Pickering Creek

John Trax  
Talbot County Farmer

Deborah Urry  
4-H Allstar

George Yurek  
Master Gardener

Don’t just get answers. Get solutions from someone you trust.