Extension Celebrates 100 Years in Dorchester County

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 land-grant universities that extends research-based knowledge through a state-by-state network of extension educators.

University of Maryland Extension (UME) 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 Dorchester County thanks to the tremendous support of our community members, local organizations, volunteers and our County Council.

Thank you to the residents of Dorchester County for celebrating this milestone with us. We look forward to what the next 100 years holds.

Visit us on the web at: http://extension.umd.edu/dorchester-county

UME Faculty, Staff and Advisory Council Members received a proclamation from the County Council in October 2014 recognizing Extension’s 100 year anniversary.

Inspiring Leaders
Changing Lives
Providing Solutions

1924 Tomato Float

Corn on plot on F.M. Reid farm near Linkwood, Dorchester Co., Md. Crimson Clover disc 8 then plowed. 1914

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Sea Grant

Established in 1977, Maryland Sea Grant has been a dedicated leader in efforts to protect and restore Maryland's coastal resources. Both on its own and in collaboration with its many partners, Sea Grant proactively addresses the scientific, economic, and social challenges facing the Chesapeake Bay.

Jennifer Dindinger serves as the Regional Watershed Restoration Specialist, Sea Grant Extension Program, for Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester Counties. She is housed in the UME Dorchester County Office.

2014 efforts in Dorchester County include:

- Provided strategic planning guidance and facilitation for Dorchester Citizens for Planned Growth, a local nonprofit organization;
- Conducted educational sessions about watershed topics with Dorchester youth through a partnership with the 4-H After School Program;
- Assisted the City of Cambridge with several successful grant applications that will fund needed stormwater improvement projects;
- Provided technical assistance around stormwater management to attendees of Nanticoke Watershed Alliance homeowner events.

Master Gardeners

Master Gardeners are volunteers, trained by the UME, who provide horticultural education services to individuals, groups and communities such as government agencies, neighborhood associations, non-profits, school and youth groups, senior citizens and garden clubs. Master Gardener programs and services are available to all Dorchester County residents and community groups.

In 2014, 21 Dorchester Master Gardeners contributed 462 hours to the County. The Independent Sector of Maryland estimates the value of a volunteer’s time is $25.43 per hour. This equates to $11,748.66 of in-kind volunteer service to Dorchester County.

Master Gardener training is conducted annually. Through a 40 hour program, participants are taught many different horticultural subjects by specialists, educators and other horticulture professionals.

Family and Consumer Sciences

Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) offers research-based, practical information for consumers, community groups and business audiences. In 2014, a senior nutrition program was offered at Signature Health Care at Mallard Bay. The program reached 80 Dorchester County participants. FCS partnered with the 4-H Program in 2014 to teach youth about plant seed science.

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4-H Youth Development

The 4-H Youth Development program incorporates the essential elements of mastery (head), belonging (heart), service (hands) and independence (health). Extension personnel and volunteers provide engaging hands-on learning experiences. Participation in 4-H helps members develop skills including communication and leadership.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS reached 52 children in 2014. Lessons focused on **ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE** utilizing the Science Discovery Series. The curriculum introduced the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and covered Water Quality, Pollution, Wildlife Habitat, Soil, Reduce Reuse Recycle, Waste Management/Landfills, Agriculture, etc. Another afterschool focus was on **HEALTH AND WELLNESS** utilizing Up for the Challenge. This is a nutrition and physical curriculum with the purpose to teach youth about the importance of physical activity and eating healthy foods. The curriculum includes fitness, nutrition, and healthy living. Students make their own healthy after-school snack, estimate their daily calorie needs; exercise with jump ropes, hula hoops and free-style dance to music; importance of good hygiene, food safety and other exciting activities.

IN-SCHOOL ENRICHMENT: Classes were offered to all elementary schools in the County and included Embryology-EggCiting Eggs; Marsh Magic; Pollution: Don’t Trash the Planet; Intro to Geology; Habitat, What’s That?; What are Amphibians; Reptiles; Insects and Those Loveable Mammals. 151 youth participated in 4-H In-School Enrichment programs in 2014.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: The 4-H Seeds of Change Club was working in Cambridge neighborhoods on Nov 8th stenciling storm drains to remind everyone to keep streets and storm drains free of trash and chemicals draining from lawns and cars. Litter and polluted water washing into our storm drains go directly to the Choptank River which drains into the Chesapeake Bay. Local organizations like Citizens for Planned Growth, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts joined together with 4-H Seeds of Change Club and their parents to promote clean storm drain water for the health of the Chesapeake Bay. This activity will occur again in 2015. This 4-H environmental community service event was funded by the Chesapeake Bay Trust.

CLUBS: 2014 4-H youth development program efforts included 76 community club members, 87 youth in 4-H special interest clubs such as Beginning Shooting Sport Classes and Hunter Safety. Total youth 4-H involvement in 2014 was 366.
Nutrient Management

The Agricultural Nutrient Management Program provides nutrient management plan development for Maryland farmers through a network of nutrient management advisors located in all 23 county Extension offices and continuing education and technical support for certified nutrient management consultants and certified farm operators via state and regional nutrient management specialists.

Extension nutrient management advisors also provide soil analysis for the Pre-Sidedress Nitrate Test (PSNT) and Fall Soil Nitrate Test (FSNT) instruction and assistance with manure spreader calibrations and yield goal checks.

In 2014, the Nutrient Management Advisor updated 34 plans that covered 9,000 acres in Dorchester County. Four new plans were completed totaling 89.3 acres.

The phosphorus site index was performed for 76 fields. Additionally, six PSNT and three FSNT were provided to local farmers.

Agriculture & Natural Resources

AGRONOMY AND CROP PRODUCTION: UME

Ag programs provide Agronomy recommendations to growers for successful crop production and organizes an annual “Agronomy Meeting” in Dorchester County with an average attendance of 55 farmers. The program is offered to farmers and includes training and credits for nutrient management and pesticide recertification. In collaboration with UME Extension specialists, UME in Dorchester County has provided assistance in weed control, soil fertility management, cover crop production, disease and insect control to find answers from current research to address production issues.

CERTIFICATION TRAINING: The State of Maryland requires private pesticide applicators to receive recertification training every 3 years and requires a nutrient voucher for those applying nutrients to 10 acres or more. UME provided re-certification training for both certifications reaching 163 individuals in 2014.

POTATO PRODUCTION: UME developed a potato program to help Maryland potato growers and industry partners to meet the increasing demand while achieving higher standards of nutritional quality for Maryland grown potatoes. Dorchester County is the largest potato producing County in the State of Maryland. During the growing season, UME hosts a field day called “Annual Eastern Shore Potato Workshop” showcasing different potato varieties and advanced breeding clones grown in Maryland conditions. This popular event is attended by growers from the entire Delmarva region reaching 28 participants.
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Our Mission:

Enhancing the quality of life for people and communities by disseminating unbiased research-based educational information.

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