Wicomico County
University of Maryland Extension
Annual Report 2023
The University of Maryland Extension, Wicomico County

County, State and Federal Partnerships

The University of Maryland Extension, Wicomico County Office provides research-based, informal education to citizens of Wicomico County and the local area. Educational programs cover a wide range of topics, including agricultural production, natural resources, food safety, nutrition and healthy lifestyles, youth development, volunteer development, urban agriculture and agricultural nutrient management. These educational and training programs provide current, practical information through workshops, seminars, clinics, camps, displays, online courses and events, and newsletters. The University of Maryland Extension Office represents a partnership of County government, the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We are glad to share with you this summary of our activities and accomplishments that improve quality of life for the 104,800 residents of Wicomico County.

The University of Maryland Wicomico County Extension office serves:

104,800 Residents of Wicomico County

14 Faculty and Staff

50 Volunteers

65 Partnerships

ON THE COVER: Dr. Haley Sater, AG Agent
Miscanthus field site
We are pleased to present our 2023 Annual Report for University of Maryland Extension – Wicomico County. Throughout the year, we continued to have a meaningful local impact, both virtually and in-person. Our Extension educators in the areas of 4-H, Family and Consumer Science, SNAP-ED, Agriculture and Food Systems, Horticulture, Water Quality, and Nutrient Management continued to meet the needs of our community. This outreach was further expanded through our 4-H and Master Gardener volunteers, who are instrumental to the success of our programs. We are thankful for their continued dedication to our educational outreach.

It is our privilege to provide research-based programming that can make such a significant difference in the lives of Wicomico County residents. As always, I welcome your input, so please feel free to contact me at kredders@umd.edu.

Sincerely,
Karen Reddersen
Area Extension Director

The Wicomico Extension Advisory Council

The Wicomico County Extension Advisory Council (EAC) is a registered non-profit, volunteer board of local residents who advise and support the work of the Wicomico County University of Maryland Extension Office. The purpose of the EAC is to serve as an advisory council to extension faculty and staff, to oversee and help maintain effective fiscal internal control procedures, to assist with public relations procedures, and to assist with identification and the building of partnerships for the Extension program.

Michelle Wright, President
Cornerstone Farms

Wayne Shaff, Treasurer
Retired Wicomico County Extension Director

John Cannon
President, Wicomico County Council

Alexis Dashield
President, Fruitland Community Center

Gretchen Boggs
Asst. STEM Coordinator
Wicomico County Schools

Charlotte Lilly
Master Gardener

Geno Lowe
Rosewood Farms

Lindsay Tayman
Drug Court Coordinator
Wicomico County Circuit Court
4-H Youth Development

4H Community Outreach

Wicomico 4-H Faculty/Staff teamed up with Wicomico Parks & Rec hosting nature walk tours & activity lessons at Pemberton Park Environmental and Nature Center for various local schools.

Pemberton Park works with our Wicomico 4-H Clubs, as a meeting/activity learning space and for community service projects.

School Youth learned about New World vs. Old World Foods and what continent they originated from.

*Do you know where your lunch items are from? New World? Old World?*

Youth did make and taste activities:

- Pumpkin Pie in a Bag, homemade whipped cream and a chocolate tasting

4H Youth and Volunteers

Wicomico 4-H along with other Tri-County 4-H youth were invited to participate in the Operation We Care “Wreaths Across America” ceremony by leading the ceremonial Pledges then respectfully laying wreaths to our Veterans.

Wicomico 4-H Youth & Volunteers participate in National, State, Regional & Local/Tri-County 4-H Events, Contests and Activities; Club meetings/activities, Individual 4-H Projects, Community Service, County & State Fair(s).
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The Wicomico County 4-H Youth Development Program provides a supportive setting for youth to reach their fullest potential. Children learn beneficial cognitive and life skills through community-focused, research-based, experiential educational programs. Participation is open to all youth ages 5-18. 4-H has a 100 year tradition of voluntary action through strong public and private partnerships at federal, state and community levels. Local volunteer leaders partner with Wicomico County Extension staff to provide direct leadership and educational support to young people in urban, suburban, and rural communities. 4-H youth develop relationships that inspire people to voluntarily help themselves and others as they interact with caring adults and peers.

IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES

4-H Club Youth & Cloverbud Members: 183

4-H Clubs: 11

Youth Participating in School Enrichment & Outreach Programs: 235

Volunteers/Leaders: 31

Youth Participating in Individual Learning Programs: 11

Melissa Esley-Collins, Program Assistant
4-H Youth Development Program
mesleyco@umd.edu, 301.226.7719
The University of Maryland Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) strives to ensure that all Maryland residents are healthy and economically successful at every stage of life through education, research, and outreach programs. We accomplish this by working with youth and families to prevent and manage chronic diseases through healthy food and physical activity choices, handling food safely, having financial literacy, health insurance literacy, and safe and healthy places to live, work, play, and learn. We help people acquire knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to make informed decisions that affect their health and economic well-being. We help people make choices that reduce debt, increase savings for emergencies and long-term goals, and make spending plans based on how much they earn and what their expenses are. We work with adults, young people, schools, organizations, businesses, and communities. We develop partnerships to maximize our expertise and outreach.

Lynn Matava
Agent, FCS
301.226.7713, lmatava@umd.edu

Family and Consumer Sciences
Programs implemented
nutrition and wellness programs focusing on diabetes, hypertension, addiction, stress, mental wellbeing, and a mindfulness program for professionals.

Nutrition and Wellness Programs
Nutrition Education Programs,
Participants Reached:

205

Food Demos,
WMDT broadcasts:

30

Educational Sessions,
Participants Reached:

58

Photo: Canning Workshop

Link to WMDT segments:
https://go.umd.edu/UMDyum
over 200,000+ viewers
DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAM

Marylanders Online is a new program under FCS working to bridge the digital divide and promote digital literacy, equity, and inclusion throughout the state of Maryland. In order to achieve this, our residents need to have access to devices, an affordable internet and enough skills to utilize these things effectively. This year a statewide needs assessment was conducted in order to better understand the needs of our community. We determined that people of all ages are in need of digital skills and access. We also determined that the digital divide disproportionately affects minority, rural and older adult communities. In order to bridge the digital divide we are supporting organizations hosting device distributions, signing residents up for the Affordable Connectivity program, and offering digital education.

Our new Technology Educator, Keri Grant, was hired in September. She hopes to launch three programs:

Find Your Footing in Technology
This program includes basic tech skills and online safety courses and is designed to help older adults primarily, but can also have some applications for youth and younger adults. Success in this program will give participants confidence in their skills, and eliminate the fear and apprehension of technology.

Lifelong Learning in Technology
This program will include courses on more specific programs like Canva and Excel, as well as skills in activities like job searching and information verification. Success in this program will give participants useful and marketable skills, as well as the confidence to discover new programs, skills and hobbies.

Workforce Development in the Haitian Creole Community
This program is designed to give the Haitian Creole population computer, job search skills and access to education or certification resources. Success in this program will uplift the Creole community and help them find comfortable and joyful lives.

IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES

Individuals Reached Through Outreach:
200

Tech Education Participants Reached:
34

Device Distribution in St. Mary’s county. Here, Keri Grant (left) is helping set up a chromebook.

Keri Grant
Tech Literacy Educator
301.226.7714, kgrant16@umd.edu
Maryland SNAP-Ed is a program within University of Maryland Extension that creates healthier environments and improves the health and wellbeing of limited income families across Maryland. SNAP-Ed programs encourage a nutritious and active lifestyle through increased food access, drinking more water, and promoting physical activity.

Wicomico County SNAP-Ed program provided community nutrition education and outreach through three initiatives: Healthy School communities, Farm to Family and Securing Food Resources.

In 2023, the SNAP-Ed Program reached 1,200 participants through educational resources with Adopt A Block. Lauren Holfeld became the SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator and Project Leader for Wicomico County in August of 2023. Partnerships with 5 elementary schools were restarted by October of 2023 for the delivery of classroom nutrition education and resources into the 2023-2024 school year.

Lauren Holfeld, SNAP-Ed Agent Associate lholfed@umd.edu, 301.226.7716

SNAP-ED Educational Reach

Farm to Family
One on One Farmer-Producer Consultations: 4
Print Materials Distributed to Market Consumers: 800

Food Access – Food Resources
Individuals Reached Through County Communication Channels: 201,782
Individuals Reached Through County Food Distribution Efforts: 3,113

Healthy School Communities
Unique Individuals Served: 1,794
Classroom Lessons Taught: 459
School-wide or Family Events Attended: 14

4th Graders at Pemberton Making Guacamole.
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

In 2023, the agriculture team out of the Wicomico office authored a refereed extension publication, "Start Growing Thornless Blackberries," providing essential guidance for cultivar selection in the Mid-Atlantic region. The team secured research grants in the amount of $227,890 in new funds, where $117,640 went directly to the University of Maryland Extension (UME). These funds supported projects like establishing thornless blackberry trials and developing integrated pest management solutions.

The ag team also played a pivotal role in ongoing projects, including those addressing sustainable agriculture, work on miscanthus in marginal lands, and cover crop planning for specific goals. Demonstrating their commitment to education, they conducted numerous teaching presentations, reaching over 300 in-person participants across various topics such as fruit and vegetable production, sustainable agriculture, and pesticide management. Their outreach efforts, including extension publications and media contributions, engaged a wide audience, with over 386 subscribers to the "Fruit Pulse" electronic newsletters. The ag team also co-organized events including Lower Shore Agronomy Day with 122 participants and a Lower Shore Vegetable meeting with 26 participants which facilitated meaningful interactions within the agricultural community.

Additionally, Haley Sater continued service as the Secretary for the Maryland State Horticultural Society which underscored her dedication to the industry.

Dr. Haley Sater
Agricultural Agent
hsater@umd.edu, 301.226.7718

IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES

Agricultural Consultations: 77

Focused Fruits and Vegetable Production: 51

Farm Management/Pesticide Education/Nutrient Management Programs: 19

Private Pesticide Certification Training for Core Pesticide Exam Participants Reached: 23

Sustainable Agriculture Alternatives for the Eastern Shore: 7
Ginny Rosenkranz is the Horticulture Educator for the Green Industry and the Master Gardener Coordinator for the Lower Eastern Shore counties. She works with arborists, landscape managers, nursery and greenhouse growers, golf course managers and garden center managers to help them with Total Plant Management/Integrated Pest Management (TPM/IPM) of their plants and landscapes. Ginny provides programs for pesticide certification for farmers and pesticide recertification for both private and commercial pesticide re-certification. Commercial pesticide programs offer recertifications in forestry, turf & ornamentals, aquatics and right of way for Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, District of Columbia and Pennsylvania. These conferences provide participants with timely information about plant pests and their controls, including practices to improve the local landscape managers knowledge of TPM/IPM. Ginny writes a weekly article complete with a full color photo of a ‘Plant of the Week’ for the on-line University of Maryland Extension TPM/IPM Weekly Report for Arborists, Landscape Managers & Nursery Managers that reaches 424 on the Eastern Shore and over 5000 in Maryland and many of the surrounding states. She also shares the report with over 100 Master Gardeners.

Ginny provides Advanced Master Gardener Programs on interesting and timely topics for the Lower Shore Counties each month to help them received their continuing education credits. Certified Master Gardeners are county residents trained to deliver research-based horticultural information to the public. Each Master Gardener receives 40+ hours of intern training and commits to donating 20 hours of community volunteer service each year. In 2023, the Master Gardener program taught residents from Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester Counties.

Ginny shares her horticulture knowledge by presenting in person on the local CBS station, Delmarva Life, where she brings in samples of plants from herbs to flowers to trees, to provide timely information for the residents of the Eastern Shore. She also writes a monthly article for Shore Home and Garden Magazine which reaches up to 1,000 readers. Free State Magazine is put together by the Maryland Nursery, Landscape and Greenhouse Association and reaches about 900 of the Green Industry in Maryland. Ginny writes 3 articles a year for this publication with many photos that highlight various plants and their attributes including, “Plants that are not Dear to Deer”.

Wicomico, Somerset and Worcester Counties Master Gardener Program

Master Gardener Interns:

17

Monthly Articles for Delmarva Shore Home and Garden Magazine

Readers Reached:

1,000

Delmarva Life Monthly Segment
Sharing Gardening Tips Year Round

Viewers Reached:

80,000

Master Gardener Plant Clinics
Reaching Over:

1,700 People
Program Educator: Jennifer Dindinger, Regional Watershed Restoration Specialist

Program Description: Watershed Protection and Restoration Program

Program Website: [Extension.umd.edu/watershed](http://Extension.umd.edu/watershed)

Jennifer works with local and state governments, non-governmental organizations, regional partners, University researchers, and communities in Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties to improve water quality in local rivers and streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

This work is accomplished by implementing restoration projects and science-based educational programs that lead to behavior change, civic engagement, and community development.

We work with local governments, community groups, and residents to improve water quality locally and in the Bay.

Examples of programming:

- Classes and workshops on practices like rain barrels, rain gardens, and tree planting.
- Technical Assistance Programs that help local government staff address water quality regulations and requirements.
- On-the-ground projects that reduce nutrient/sediment inputs and involve collaborative partnerships and effective funding techniques.

Jennifer Dindinger, UMD Sea Grant Watershed Restoration Specialist
jdinding@umd.edu  410.228.8800
UMD Extension Wicomico County office offers a variety of educational services to the commercial farm community. Some programs train or recertify agricultural producers to meet State regulations. Other seminars provide technical and business information that introduce new technologies or practices that help farmers improve production, operate more profitably, and maintain the environment.

In addition, our office assists agricultural producers by writing and updating nutrient management plans that are required by Maryland regulations. Maryland’s Nutrient Management Program provides clients with information on Best Management Practices that aim to balance nutrient applications with crop nutrient requirements, thereby enhancing farm profitability while protecting water quality.

Nick Nuwer is the Wicomico County Extension Nutrient Management Advisor. He provides plans to the county's farming community by meeting with the farmer to discuss all aspects of the soil conditions and crops grown.

Nick Nuwer
Nutrient Management Advisor
301.226.7721, nnuwer@umd.edu

IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES

Total Acres Covered by Nutrient Management Plan: 8,379

Saved Eastern Shore Farmers By Offering These Services At No Charge: $47,969

Number of Plans Written: 242

Number of Fields Planned (Average Field Size 18.50 acres): 453

Number of Cooperators Served: 59

Number of Cooperators with Animals: 39
About the University of Maryland Extension

University of Maryland Extension (UME) is a statewide, non-formal education system within the college of Agriculture and Natural Resources. UME educational programs and problem-solving assistance are available to all community members and are based on the research and experience of land grant universities such as the University of Maryland, College Park.

In Maryland, UME employs approximately 200 faculty and approximately 200 support staff and contractual employees located at the University of Maryland, College Park; all 23 counties; Baltimore City; and four research and education centers. Many UME faculty members located on the College Park and Eastern Shore campuses have joint appointments with research and academic programs. These joint appointments promote the exchange of knowledge between the universities, academic specialties, and the local community through workshops and events, trainings and publications, and outreach through schools and community organizations that are available free or at a minimal cost to the public.

Wicomico County Extension Office:
http://extension.umd.edu/Wicomico-county

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