

# -Report to the People- Harlan County 2024

 Cooperative  
Extension Service



Martin's Fork Lake is a 374-acre recreational lake managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and originally built for flood control purposes. The lake is unique in Kentucky for being home to four species of black bass: largemouth, smallmouth, spotted, and redeye bass. In addition to fishing, the lake offers various recreational activities such as boating, swimming, and picnicking.



**Website:** [harlan.ca.uky.edu](http://harlan.ca.uky.edu)



**Facebook:** @HarlanCountyCES

**For More Information, Please contact us at:**

Harlan County Extension Office  
519 South Main Street, Harlan, KY 40831  
(606) 573-4464—[Harlan.ext@uky.edu](mailto:Harlan.ext@uky.edu)

## **Maple Syrup Production**

Kentucky's abundant maple trees present an opportunity for landowners to diversify their income and contribute to local economic growth through maple syrup production.

The Harlan County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Kentucky Maple Syrup Association collaborated to provide educational programs on maple syrup production. These programs included a Backyard Maple Syrup program at the Kentucky Maple Syrup School and another held in Harlan County.

A total of 34 individuals attended the two programs, with 19 of them having never made maple syrup.



The educational programs were successful in generating interest and inspiring action among participants. 100% of the first time participants indicated their intention to produce maple syrup in 2025. This demonstrates a significant impact and a potential for increased maple syrup production in Harlan County and Kentucky, as a whole. While some attendees planned to tap a few maples in their yards and utilize a natural food source, others were inspired to explore the commercial potential of maple syrup production that has generated over \$40,000 in recent years. There is a promising opportunity for new entrants to contribute to and benefit from this growing market.

## **Addressing Estate Planning and Heir Properties**

Harlan County faces a significant issue with heirs property due to inadequate estate planning. This leads to uncertainty, legal complications, and potential economic burdens for heirs.

The Harlan County Extension Service, in collaboration with the Harlan County Extension Council and Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network (LiKEN), organized a Will Clinic and Heir Property Education Program. This program provided free legal advice and assistance to county residents.

Fifteen Harlan County residents attended the program and gained knowledge about estate planning and heir property issues. Twelve participants were able to create legally binding wills at no cost, saving them over \$7,000 in potential legal fees. By addressing estate planning needs participants can prevented future legal disputes and financial burdens for their heirs. The program empowered residents to make informed decisions about their assets and ensure a smooth transition for future generations.



## **Harlan County Jr. Homemaker Day Camp**

The Harlan County Jr. Homemaker Day Camp provided the opportunity for youth life skill enhancement through a variety of cooking and nutrition lessons as well as leadership building activities.

Campers had the chance to spend three days learning youth life skills such as how to properly hold a knife, how to read a recipe, and how to accurately measure ingredients. Participants were able to practice these skills during cooking sessions at camp daily as they prepared their own healthy meals each day.

- 100% of Jr. Homemaker Campers reported that they gained knowledge regarding the importance of eating whole grains daily.
- 100% of campers reported that they increased their knowledge regarding the importance of drinking water.
- 100% of participants reported an increase in cooking skills knowledge reporting increased measuring and knife holding skills.



## **LEAP (Literacy, Eating, and Activity for Primary)**

With childhood obesity on the rise, it is now more important than ever to start educating children early about the importance of healthy eating habits. Through a partnership with local school districts, the Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences educated 415 primary students at 8 different schools throughout Harlan County using the LEAP curriculum.

The LEAP curriculum includes using a storybook to teach topics such as nutrition, physical fitness, dental health, and handwashing. LEAP programs also include a variety of activities including sampling a healthy snack, physical fitness/exercise games, and experiments.

- 100% of LEAP student participants reported increased knowledge related to the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables every day.
- 100% of participants also reported increased knowledge related to the importance of being physically active on a regular basis.



## 4-H Youth Development

### Leadership Academy

The Harlan County 4-H Teen Leadership Academy is a program designed to engage local youth in leadership and civic education. It addresses the need for increased civic engagement, leadership development, and exposure to government and media in Harlan County. Many youth lack access to opportunities that teach them about government processes, media, and essential skills like communication and leadership.

The academy fills this gap by offering hands-on experiences, including visits to the local courthouse, WYMT TV station, and the state capital in Frankfort. These trips allow teens to meet officials and learn about government and media functions. Additionally, participants improve their public speaking skills through Communications Day and contribute to their community through a service project.

By focusing on these areas, the academy empowers teens to become informed citizens and leaders, equipping them with valuable skills to succeed in both their personal and professional lives. The program concludes with a graduation, recognizing their achievements and growth.



### Chick Incubation

Each March the Chick Incubation Program is offered in our county schools. Each participating school received one-two incubators as well as eggs from the Extension Office. Approximately 1,000 students were given worksheets and illustrations showing the life cycle of the egg. During the incubation period, 4-H Staff visited the schools and “candled” the eggs. Candling is the act of looking into the eggs with the use of a small powerful flashlight to see if the egg has a chick inside. Teachers keep the chicks in their classroom for all the classes to visit the newly hatched chicks.

Through this hands-on experience, students learned valuable skills, such as observation, responsibility, and the scientific process. They gained a deeper understanding of biology and animal care. An estimated 84% of students actively engaged in the project, developing skills in patience, teamwork, and critical thinking. The project not only fostered an appreciation for science but also taught students about life cycles and the importance of caring for living creatures.



## Harlan County Extension Staff

Jeremy Williams, Extension Agent for Agriculture/Natural Resources

Chasity Heck, Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences

Joshua Turner, Extension Agent for 4-H Youth and Development

Pat Duncan, Family and Consumer Sciences Program Assistant

Lisa Cook, 4-H Program Assistant

Anne Daniels, Staff Assistant

Andre Broughton, Custodian

## Extension At a Glance

- 57 Individuals reporting improved knowledge regarding disaster preparedness (such as emergency kit contents; daily water needs for survival; damage assessment; evacuation and sheltering in place plans)
- 537 People who used Extension information to make decisions on garden and orchard site selection, varieties, and/or maintenance
- 223 People who increased knowledge on health, management and/or utilization (includes forest health program, urban tree health programs, forestry webinar series, Master Logger program, Woodland Owner Short course, Non-timber products {i.e. mushrooms, Christmas trees, maple syrup}, naturalist programs, county based forestry program, small scale logging, forest industry training, log and lumber grading trainings, and other “tree-centric” programs)
- 415 Participants reporting intention to eat more fruits, more vegetables and to be more physically active.
- 15 Individuals who gained knowledge related to financial management
- 3830 Youth (15-18) engaged in AG 4-H programming
- 375 Youth (15-18) engaged in 4-H Specialty Camping (Environmental, etc. ) Programming
- 506 Youth (15-18) engaged in Health 4-H Programming

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# KENTUCKY



# COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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UK MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT  
KSU COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY AND THE SCIENCES

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**University of Kentucky  
Cooperative Extension**  
S-107 Ag Science Center North  
Lexington, KY 40546-0091  
(859) 257-4302

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## Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
4-H Youth Development  
Community and Economic Development

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