

Report to the People



Johnson County Cooperative Extension

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2024- 2025

Johnson County



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- Johnson County, Kentucky, was created by the legislature on February 24, 1843, carved from Lawrence, Floyd and Morgan counties. The county conducted its first business on April 1, 1844, and a courthouse was soon constructed in Paintsville. The town was first known as Paint Lick Station and had been founded in 1790.
- The county's economy was initially based on agriculture, with the addition of significant timbering in the decades after the Civil War. That changed dramatically in 1904 with the arrival of the railroad at Paintsville, which ushered in the coal era.

Source: <https://www.johnsoncoky.com/home/about-johnson-county>

Cooperative Extension Service

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

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

Meet Our Extension Agents



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Meet Our Extension Assistants



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ANR Program Assistant



4-H Youth Development

Learning Financial Responsibility through Reality Store

The Reality Store program provided an interactive, hands-on experience designed to give eighth-grade students the opportunity to explore various career paths and simulate real-life budgeting and lifestyle decisions they will face as adults.

This past year we had 245 eighth-grade students attended the Reality Store event. Upon completion, participants were surveyed, and the results were as follows:

68% reported an increase in their knowledge of budgeting money.

70% reported an increase in their understanding of the importance of making wise financial decisions.

67% now recognize the connection between education and career choices.

66% now understand the link between career choice and lifestyle.

Feedback from students was positive and insightful. For instance, one student noted, "It showed me how life works and how fast you spend money," while another commented, "It taught me life skills."



JCMS 8th graders visiting the Health Care booth at Reality Store.



Campers participating in color blast at the end of Messy Games.

Youth Find their Spark at 4-H Camp

Our 4-H Camping program provides youth with a unique opportunity to explore activities that may not always be available or accessible to them at home. From sallying down the alley and ziplining to canoeing, swimming, getting messy, and making new friends from all over our county and others. Youth are allowed to explore their own interests and encouraged to find new ones.

This year, we had the joy of sharing our camp magic with 34 campers, 6 teen leaders, and 4 adult leaders! Our theme, 'Under the Big Top,' delighted the kids as they embraced the circus life, playing the roles of clowns, animals, and sideshow acts.

Post-camp surveys indicated that campers experienced a positive change in being willing to try new things, enjoying the outdoors, learning new activity and life skills as well as taking care of self needs.

One survey participant stated " My camper had a great break from electronic devices. She came home with a whole new love of the outdoors. I love that she had responsibilities at camp and learned some independence which I could see at home."

Another commented "We are so thankful for 4-H Camp and my kid looks forward to it every year. I attended when I was a kid and have wonderful memories so I'm glad they can make them too!"

Introducing the Johnson County Teen Council

Teen Council is a new club that we started in September of 2024. It is a core component of our 4-H programming. Members have a direct impact on the programs we offer and the community service projects we undertake. So far members have volunteered for various events to help other youth in the county as well as making holiday cards for our troops and collecting donations for our local animal shelter. Throughout the remainder of this year they plan to give out Valentine's Day gift bags at a local nursing home and undertake a spring cleaning event to help beautify our community.

Thus far, Teen Council has been a fantastic opportunity for our youth to meet and work with other youth both locally and across the state. Members of this club get priority for overnight trips and conferences throughout the year. It is also a requirement to maintain teen council membership and attend a certain number of events to be able to apply to be a teen counselor at camp. Our teen council meets monthly and is open to 7th-12th graders in Johnson County. We currently have twenty five fantastic young leaders serving on our council and continue to accept new members each month.





4-H Youth Development

Making a Splash With Summer Programming

This past year we provided several day camp options through our office. These included project camps for sewing and art as well as a cooking camp for our cloverbuds.

The Sewing series was open to ages 9-18 and focused on essential skills such as operating sewing machines, reading patterns, fabric cutting and hand-sewing techniques. Each day, participants completed different projects ranging from throw pillows to pin cushions, table runners, and canvas tote bags. We provided all materials and equipment.

Thirteen youth participated in the camp, and three of their projects were selected to represent Johnson County at the 2024 State Fair, where each received a red ribbon. Post-session surveys revealed that 80% of participants felt more confident in their sewing abilities and could identify basic sewing machine parts independently. Additionally, 60% felt comfortable using patterns to cut fabric and could thread a sewing machine on their own. Forty percent felt confident they could recreate at least one project from the camp.

The Art series was open to ages 9-18 and focused on various techniques across multiple mediums. Each day, participants had the opportunity to complete multiple pieces of artwork. Day one emphasized painting techniques, day two focused on drawing techniques, and day three concentrated on crafts. All materials and equipment were provided.

A total of eleven youth participated in the art camp, and seven of their projects were selected to represent Johnson County at the 2024 State Fair. Of these, one received a Class Champion award for two-point perspective, four received blue ribbons, two received red ribbons, and one received a white ribbon. Post-session surveys revealed that all survey participants felt more confident in their artistic abilities and could recreate the artwork practiced during the sessions. Additionally, survey participants felt confident creating art in various styles and mediums.

The Clover Bud Cooking series was a joint program with our Sr. SNAP Ed representative Elaine Burton designed for children aged 6-9. Our focus was on food safety, learning how to cut, measure, and prepare meals, as well as understanding the importance of a balanced diet using the MyPlate diagram. Each day, participants had the opportunity to prepare an appetizer, entrée, and dessert. All recipes were selected from approved NEP materials and emphasized trying new, healthier foods. We had a total of eleven participants.

Post-session surveys showed that 100% of survey participants learned how germs are transferred to food, the importance of handwashing, how to measure ingredients, and felt more confident in helping with cooking at home. 66% felt confident enough to safely handle a knife, cut produce, and now understand how to read and interpret the MyPlate diagram. One parent shared, "My child had a wonderful time at cooking camp! Thank you for the opportunity! She looks forward to additional camps in the future."



Projecting Our Youth Into a Brighter Future

Johnson County 4-H had a spectacular week at the 2024 Kentucky State Fair! The ribbon ranking system at state fair is blue, red, and white with blue being the highest. Class champions, reserve champions and grand champions are then chosen from the blue ribbon winners. Listed below are the total ribbon counts for Johnson County 4-H!

Grand Champion- 1 (Rabbit Show)

Reserve Grand Champion- 2 (Rabbit show and Poultry Showmanship)

Class Champion - 1 (Art)

Blue Ribbons- 22

Red Ribbons- 12

White Ribbon- 1



Our livestock Club members did especially well this past year. They competed in a range of in person competitions including; Poultry Showmanship, Poultry Judging, Country Hams, Rabbit Showmanship, Rabbit Show, and Avian Bowl. Of the ribbon totals listed above Livestock club members are responsible for all grand and reserve champion ribbons. Seventeen Blue Ribbons and seven Red Ribbons. One of our members even placed top three in the state for their country ham! They are already practicing for the 2025 Fair.



Improving Hay Quality

Every farm struggles to provide quality feed to its livestock, but in the steep terrain and poor soils of east Kentucky, the challenge becomes even greater. Working with the ANR agent and UK forage specialist to pinpoint fertility and determine proper seeding methods, one Johnson County horse owner recently converted about 11 acres of hay ground to Roundup-Ready alfalfa to combat johnsongrass.

Hay testing through the 2024 East Kentucky Hay Contest found that the resulting alfalfa hay had 23% crude protein, among the highest of the 620 samples from 14 counties that were tested for the event. Growing horses typically need about 18% crude protein in their daily ration, so this high-quality hay saves the producer roughly 25 cents per horse, per day for the entire hay feeding season.



Another farm operation utilized Extension assistance to continue their production of summer annual hay silage, using sudangrass. With technical advice from the ANR agent and UK forage specialist, the farm once again topped the East Kentucky Hay Contest forage quality results in the summer annual silage category, with a relative forage quality of 177.8, placing it solidly in the “premium” category of 140+ RFQ.

The complex process of ensiling hay requires careful attention to moisture content, wrapping, and handling, so the advice provided through Extension has made it possible for this farm to produce top-quality forage and store it safely for their cattle operation.

Extension Helps Horse Owners Meet Health Requirements



Equine infectious anemia (EIA) is a potentially deadly disease of horses that is easily transmitted between animals. The Coggins test, which identifies the presence of EIA, is required in all 50 states for transit of horses across state lines. The high cost of the test is a challenge to many riders, as is finding the time through the work week to load their horses and visit the veterinarian's office.

To overcome these hurdles, the Extension Office offers a Coggins clinic each year to provide discounted tests by a local veterinarian to get riders the all-clear for their horses, allowing them to safely attend events like the nearby Knott County Trail Ride, which draws hundreds of horses and riders from all over the country. The clinic is held on a Saturday so that riders have an easier time getting their equine companions loaded and transported for the test.

Boosting Food Security for Senior Citizens



Shoppers of all ages found a variety of local foods at the Farmers' Market

The 2023 Extension Community Needs Assessment for Johnson County showed the top priority for Individual and Family Development Needs was access to affordable, nutritious food. Extension administered two programs, the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and the Kentucky Double Dollars program, that provide financial assistance to low-income senior citizens to purchase locally grown produce at the Johnson County Farmers' Market.

These two programs brought in nearly \$10,000 to supplement the seniors' own income in purchasing healthy foods at the convenient, accessible site of the farmers' market.



Large crowds visit the Farmers' Market each sale day

Weed Control, Soil Testing, and Yellowjackets!



Field Pepperweed in newly seeded fescue

Service calls are a big part of the ANR program. One common need is helping farmers deal with weed problems like the one shown. The ANR agent worked with a UK specialist to identify the weed properly so that treatment would be effective.

The agent also submitted 34 soil samples to the lab for testing to help producers of all kinds to pinpoint fertility for maximum plant performance with the lowest possible cost and environmental impact.

A major issue in the fall of 2024 was the massive population of yellowjackets. The ANR agent fielded countless phone calls about the issue, later producing a simple video on social media that agents used statewide to show homeowners how to construct a simple trap to control yellowjackets. The agent also visited two local middle school agriculture classes to show them how to construct the traps for a pesticide-free solution to use on school grounds.

Creating and Maintaining Family Traditions

This program was an effort to share information about the importance of maintaining family traditions during holiday gatherings, while maintaining a budget, to families expecting children or with children younger than 90 days. This was a collaboration with the Johnson County Health Department, serving all of Johnson County residents. Although this is a program offered to everyone in the community, the socioeconomic status of the clientele represented during this event was very low; additionally, the poverty rate in Johnson County exceeds that of the national average.

Education was provided to participants about the importance of maintaining an/or beginning traditions with their children and an explanation of the long-term effects it can have on their development. The parents were given materials to continue learning at home and materials to begin a "Holiday Plate" tradition as suggested in the publication: *Creating and Maintaining Family Traditions*.

The Johnson County Health Department requested we prepare enough material for their 72 families. These families consist of 1 or more parent/grandparent as the primary caregiver and additional children within the home.

Upon conclusion of this program and take-home activity, participants will be more confident in their ability to create and maintain current family traditions at little to no cost during each season. By making these efforts, it is the primary goal of this program to support the development of children by equipping their parent/guardian with educational opportunities that they can provide within their homes.



A participant's completed enrichment activity



Materials provided to parents for reinforcement of education provided

2024 - 2025

Total Programs: 76

Total Reach: 2,041



How To Get Out of a Mealtime Rut

According to the 2023 Community Needs Assessment, two pressing issues in Johnson County for Individual and Family Development Needs is "ensuring individuals and families have access to affordable nutritious food." and "stronger parenting and relationship-building skills." Taking this data into consideration, a program was taught at the Johnson County Public Library focused on the importance of eating meals together as a family. In order to convey the importance of this habit to participants, materials from *How To Get Out of a Mealtime Rut* and *Cook Together, Eat Together* were utilized.

In collaboration with the Johnson County Public Library, a lesson focused on creative strategies and barrier reduction for increasing the number of weeknight dinners eaten by families was taught to the public.

The initial goals of this program:

1. Increase food preparation skills in an effort to strengthen the knowledge and use of affordable nutritious food by the families in representation of Johnson County within this class.
2. Improve food resource management practices for participants in an effort to strengthen parenting and relationship building skills through the act of weekly family dinners.

Per the evaluation, 100% of the participants chose "Yes" when examining their behavior change strategies in response to attending this program. Specifically, one of these behavior change responses was to try a creative strategy to overcome a cooking rut at home. Additionally, all participants showed an increase in their Level of Understanding for importance of eating meals at home, creative strategies to increase meals at home, and how to overcome barriers when present. Finally, a common significant take away from this class for the participants was the incorporation of using their Slow Cooker for weekly meal rotations.



Laugh and Learn

The program is designed to bring the adult caregiver (parent or guardian) and child together to engage in a 45–55-minute program that shares books, music, movement, healthy snacks, and crafts in a fun filled learning rich environment. Engaging the parent or caregiver in the program not only increases the time the parent and child spend together, but also helps educate the parent or caregiver on specific ways to interact with their child at home encouraging learning and ultimately increasing school readiness.

Each lesson's activities are detailed and available to the caregiver as a handout allowing them to repeat the learning experience in their own home. This development method allows for repetitious learning and provides the learning experience in a grab-and-go-bag format for those unable to attend in person.

During 2024 we have offered this program in three different ways: local parks, local preschools, and at the CES office. This versatility allows for us to make all reasonable efforts to reach as many pre-school age children and their parents as possible.

OLM's 2-year-old class participated in a lesson from Laugh and Learn curriculum focused on The Farm. These students participated in activities that allowed them to learn and explore new things, learn to work independently, practice their ability to focus and listen, sample items for a balance diet, practice their gross motor skills such as running and jumping, practice their fine motor skills of picking up small objects, and their interaction with other children.



Two preschoolers participate in a gross motor activity during Laugh and Learn at Thealka Park.

Nutrition Education Program

Elaine Burton, Senior SNAP-Ed Assistant, provides educational programming bimonthly in collaboration with our local Appalachian Regional Healthcare (ARH) Facility. This program reaches 30 - 40 individuals each month and provides nutrition education focused on diabetes prevention. Along with the direct education, participants sample Nutrition Education Approved recipes.



Elaine Burton, SNAP-Ed Assistant, teaching a group about Diabetes Education in collaboration with ARH.

In addition to classes held at the office, Elaine provides regularly scheduled programming at the Johnson County Senior Citizen Center, 3 Johnson County Head Start Classes, Johnson County Middle School, and Johnson County Farmers' Market.

During 2024, Elaine reached a total of 2,214 participants.



Dinner Under The Pines



The historic Mountain Homeplace Farm houses participants for the first annual Dinner Under The Pines Farm to Table Event

Dinner Under the Pines was a multifaceted event hosted by The Johnson County Cooperative Extension Services. This event was the first of its' kind in our area and it's hoped to become an annual occurrence. This Farm to Table structured program sheds light on how vital Cooperative Extension is to our communities; as the educational bridge between The University of Kentucky and our neighbors. The focus of this program was to spotlight our local agriculture and support farmers in our community; however, it went much farther than that.

By hosting this event, we worked with an estimated 24 local farms and multiple school-based, student-led programs such as 4-H, FFA and FCCLA. Working in collaboration with these various groups has helped to strengthen our community in various ways.

- An estimated \$3000 total in produce returned to our local economy.
- Country Hams submitted by local 4-H youth participants were auctioned off with \$530 raised.
- State Fair projects completed by JCHS FFA and JC 4-H Youth Development Participants were on display for spectators to view before being showcased at the State Fair later this month.
- Speeches from Etta Daniels and Adara Campbell were given to the crowd before heading to the State Fair.
- 170 individuals participated in a family style dining event.

To provide this event to our community, we worked in collaboration with Johnson County Tourism, Johnson Central High School FFA, and Johnson Central High School's Culinary Arts Department. These various groups worked tirelessly alongside us as we planned and prepared for the event. It is an understatement to say that this would not have been possible without each organization. In addition to the partnerships listed above, 33 local businesses and/or agencies supported us to provide items to participants as a "thank you".

Johnson Central High School's FCCLA encompasses a Culinary Arts program that works frequently within the community by catering events. This student led catering business was able to provide 200 meals for the event. Those 200, 3 course meals consisted of recipes developed by The University of Kentucky's Nutrition Education Program and utilized produce and products sourced locally from our Farmers' fields. This feature made catering for the event slightly more cumbersome due to the strategic planning; however, the students and their instructor, Miss Angie Music, provided a flawless service.

Johnson Central High School's FFA Chapter, under the direction of Sheena Blair, constructed and arranged all floral arrangements for the event throughout the venue. These decorations were a hit among guests, to say the least. Also, all parking and ticket retrieval was completed by FFA members and assistance was given as needed throughout the night.

It was truly an honor to have special guests, Warren Beeler and Sharon Spencer, spend the evening with us as well. Hearing them speak to our crowd on the importance of agriculture for our communities helped reinforce the need we felt to host the event.

Dinner Under the Pines
Farm to Table

Menu:

Appetizers:
Tomato & Basil Bruschetta
Fresh-Cut Fruit

Main Course:
Salad
Smoked Brisket or Roasted Pork
Squash Supreme
Green Beans
Corn on the Cob
Fresh Sliced Tomatoes
Cornbread Muffins

Dessert:
Triple Berry Crisp
or
Blueberry Cream Cheese Pound Cake

Menu for Dinner Under The Pines 2024



Johnson County

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