



A Message from the County Director

It is my pleasure to represent a staff of outstanding professionals who strive every day to positively impact the lives of the citizens of DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties. To say that 2021 stretched the staff to their limits would be an understatement. While the pandemic has brought many changes to our programming, it has also brought numerous opportunities for innovation and diversity. I believe the work performed by the staff in our unit truly epitomizes Illinois Extension's motto, "Extending Knowledge, Changing Lives."

Enclosed in this report, you will find evidence of our programs' impact on the region.

Extension programming reaches audiences of all ages and addresses the wide variety of community needs in all three of the counties we serve. There is simply not enough room in this report to describe the many innovative and educational outreach programs presented by our in staff in 2021, nor the full influence of those initaitives. I hope you will take the time to learn more about our programs, volunteers, and impact.

Thank you for your continued support of Illinois Extension in DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties.





Doug Harlan County Director

Staff Serving Dewitt, Macon, & Piatt Counties



STAFF

Doug Harlan County Director

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Roxanna Waterhouse Office Support Assistant, Macon County

Charles Young Program Coordinator, 4-H Youth Development

Think Global, Act Local

Illinois Extension embodies the land grant mission of University of Illinois, providing applied research and education to address societal grand challenges and local issues.



Community

Support Strong and Resilient Youth, Families, and Communities

- **%** Connectedness and Inclusion
- Mark Involvement and Leadership
- Thriving Youth



Economy

Grow a Prosperous Economy

- **Economic Vitality**
- Financial Wellbeing
- Workforce Preparedness/Advancement



Environment

Sustain Natural Resources in Home and Public Spaces

- Enhancing and Preserving Natural Resources
- Engagement with Home and Community Landscape



Food

Maintain a Safe and Accessible Food Supply

- Food Access
- Food Production
- Food Safety



Health

Maximize Physical and Emotional Health for All

- Chronic Disease Prevention and Management
- Social and Emotional Health
- ♦ Healthy and Safe Environments

Look for these icons throughout this report to see how Illinois Extension is meeting these grand challenges at a local level.

Statewide Highlights

Outreach Provided

565	335	84
Illinois	Educational	Online Courses
Communities	Sessions Per Week	
Served		

Partnerships Supported

6,445	278	1,000
Adult	Community	School Partnerships
Volunteers	Gardens	

Learners Engaged

8,000,000	14,450	500,000
Website Users	Online	Educational Program
	Course Users	Attendees

Resources Generated

\$14,000,000	\$242,000
Value of Volunteer	Value of Donated
Contributions	Garden Produce

Extension leaders meet with local stakeholders to define annual priorities that allow us to respond to evolving and emerging needs and make meaningful progress toward important long-term outcomes. This blend of long-range focus and local accountability is a powerful strategy that ensures we stay true to our mission as we serve communities across the state.







Thriving youth are at the core of healthy, robust communities. Illinois Extension's mentorship-based youth development model focuses on social competence, academic success, career development, and community connection. The 4-H experience creates opportunities and environments for all youth to thrive today and in the future.

Youth learn gardening skills with 4-H summer program

This year DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties 4-H staff reached out to form new partnerships with community organizations and strengthen already established relationships. This effort was instrumental in helping in-person programs return for our community youth.

Grow A Salsa Garden was hosted by eight libraries and summer care sites in Piatt and DeWitt counties. Youth grew the tomato transplant, cilantro seeds, and onion bulbs in five-gallon buckets. Families received gardening resources to ensure a successful harvest by the end of summer. Youth made and sampled salsa to prepare them when their produce was ready. Grow a Salsa Garden inspired 150 youth across Piatt and DeWitt counties, helping each gain confidence in growing and preparing their own food.





Spice It Up was a six-week program hosted by libraries and summer care sites in Macon County. Each week, youth learned about a different herb and planted a small start of the herb to take home. Participants prepared a simple recipe using the week's herb. The excitement came when youth connected the herb's flavor to something they had tasted before but didn't know it was something they could easily grow at home!

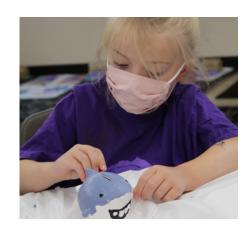
My boys love being able to actually plant something, then connecting it with something they have fun cooking and eating. It's been a wonderful experience! PARENT, SPICE IT UP PROGRAM





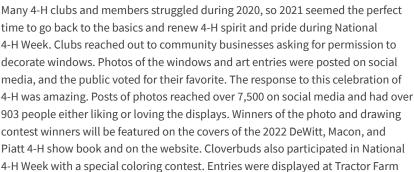
CALLING ALL SUPERHEROES 4-H CLUB

Growing snowflake crystals, practicing yoga, and creating their own cereal from the comfort of home were just a few highlights of this monthly virtual 4-H Cloverbud Club. An in-person Shipwrecked themed program showed Cloverbuds the wide variety of activities 4-H has to offer and encouraged participants to bring a friend. Teen teachers led activities for Cloverbuds who were "stranded" on the desert island, such as making a first-aid kit, painting a shark piggy bank, and making paper airplanes to get off the island. Cloverbuds and their guests were invited to a follow up activity, an unboxing event, at the DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties 4-H fair. Each child was given individually wrapped activities relating to a 4-H project, such as icing and a piping bag to practice food decorating, seeds and a pot, chopsticks to practice picking up food while learning about Japanese culture, and a mini canvas with paint.





CELEBRATING 4-H





STEAM FUN AT LUNCH

Lunchtime is often a missed opportunity to provide youth with an enriching activity. The 4-H Lunch Club was a six-week program at Maroa Forsyth Elementary School that added an element of fun to the traditional lunch hour for students in third, fourth, and fifth grades. Planned activities in science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM) engaged the students, and discussions connecting the weekly activity with the corresponding 4-H project broadened the students' knowledge of 4-H. Bouncy balls, an intro to SCRATCH coding programs, monoprints, catapults, soil testing, and straw rockets fueled the excitement for this group. The success of the 4-H Lunch Club drew interest in the community and has resulted in the creation of a new community 4-H club that will focus on STEAM topics.





ONE UNIT, ONE 4-H SHOW

Changes to the 4-H show seemed to happen rapidly in 2021. The virtual option transitioned to in-person and 4-H members were busy completing projects and preparing livestock. This was the first year for a combined DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties 4-H show. Clubs gathered at the DeWitt County Fairgrounds to display general projects for judging and show livestock. Although the weather wasn't cooperative, the torrential downpours did not dampen the spirits of the members. Buildings were busy with judging activities, barns were filled with moos and oinks. Rooster crows on Saturday morning alerted anyone driving by that there was definitely something happening on the grounds.





SNAP-Ed partnership provides produce to community



One of our biggest projects this year was a partnership between University of Illinois Extension SNAP-Ed, the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners, and Crossing Healthcare to work on a **Growing Together Illinois** project. Crossing Healthcare had the existing Prescription Produce program for patients with qualifying health conditions, and the goal of this partnership was to expand the program to include food insecurity as a qualifier for enrolling in the Prescription Produce Program. During this partnership, SNAP-Ed staff hosted *Eat.Move.Save*. booths to provide nutrition education to program participants, conducted a communications campaign to educate the community about the project, led sustainability planning, and assisted in program evaluation.



A portion of the garden at Crossing Healthcare.



51 Food Insecure Patients Enrolled



1,031 Produce Distribution to Patients



3,534
Pounds of Produce Harvested



1,012
Volunteer Hours Spent at the Garden

The SNAP-Ed direct education staff were also successful in navigating and adapting to the COVID-19 policies of the local schools, daycares, after school programs, and other locations within the community. While many locations opened up in 2021, some still remained closed to outside visitors. For those sites, the staff developed pre-recorded lessons to continue to reach those community members.

Master Gardeners explore new ways to learn



22

Those interested in Master Gardener training in 2021 were offered several ways to access training. A self-paced online training was offered locally three times throughout 2021, in January, May, and August. Trainees could also opt for a hybrid Master Gardener training, with a live virtual session supplemented with independent study. In-person training resumed in fall at the Macon County office. Through these sessions, our tri-county area welcomed 13 new Master Gardener trainees to the program. These five training options will be offered again in 2022.

Extension Master Gardener volunteers continue to spread their knowledge and generosity among communities through efforts such as speaking at garden clubs, civic groups, or schools; answering calls or emails at garden help desks; establishing demonstration gardens that serve as educational tools; and educating citizens on how to establish community gardens.

When people volunteer or advocate for a local issue, they see themselves as part of the solution and their community pride soars. Providing decision-makers with practical, timely, and research-based information gives leaders the tools they need to strengthen their communities and improve the quality of life in rural and urban areas throughout Illinois.



13 New Master Gardener Trainees



112

Master Gardener Volunteers in DeWitt, Macon & Piatt Counties



5,664

Master Gardener volunteer hours in DeWitt, Macon & Piatt Counties, a value of \$166,351.68.



847

Master Gardener continuing education hours in DeWitt, Macon & Piatt Counties



162

Master Gardener Help Desk questions answered in DeWitt, Macon & Piatt Counties



4,232

Pounds of produce donated by DeWitt, Macon & Piatt Counties, a value of \$6,249



Find out more about Master Gardener Training go.illinois.edu/MGTrainingDMP



Grant funds food insecurity efforts

University of Illinois Extension Horticulture and SNAP-ED partnered with Crossing Healthcare to address the burden of food insecurity in Macon County, working together to expand Crossing Healthcare's Prescription Produce Program. Grant monies were used to purchase seeds, growing supplies, and materials for raised beds.

In 2015, Crossing Healthcare launched their Prescription Produce Program for patients who have diabetes or prediabetes, youth ages 6-12 with a BMI greater than 85%, patients who are participating in the weight loss program, and patients in the substance use disorder outpatient program. In 2021, the program was expanded to include patients who screened positive for food insecurity. As part of this program, clients were provided a weekly "prescription" for fresh produce between the months of June and October. Throughout the growing season, Extension staff and Master Gardener volunteers provided education on how to use and prepare the distributed items, as well as how to garden at home. To bring further awareness to this location and its efforts, Master Gardeners held several educational programs and a garden tour.

Research shows a strong link between food insecurity, poor health, and even poor academic outcomes for children. Food insecurity is not just about hunger. It's about not having access to food options that meet nutritional needs, which is particularly important for individuals and families with limited resources. Extension's network of volunteers and partners work together to address food insecurity.



Master Gardener Brenda Craven displays vegetable garden at Crossing Healthcare during a garden tour.

Participants take to the trails for Extension tree identification walks

Horticulture Educator Sarah Vogel led participants on tree identification walks in various locations throughout the fall of 2021. Participants studied tree morphology and learned how to identify trees by characteristics and leaves. Discussion included prevalent tree pests, pathogens, invasive species awareness, and advocacy. Outdoor programming provided an opportunity for participants to gather comfortably while Extension promoted the joys of nature through education.



Horticulture Extension Educator Sarah Vogel discusses tree characteristics with participants.

Library partnership adds additional programs for Clinton residents

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Vespasian Warner Library in DeWitt County provided Extension programs to residents of Clinton. In addition to seed sharing, the library started a Master Gardener Help Desk in service to the community. Extension staff offered a composting presentation and a workshop on terrariums. The long waiting list for the terrarium event indicates that similar workshops will be well-attended in the future, and evaluation indicates that interest spanned a range of demographics. The partnership with Vespasian Warner Library has cultivated volunteer involvement, environmental awareness, and community partnership.



Participants add materials to their terrariums at Vespasian Warner Library in Clinton.





Instant cooking participants gain confidence, experience

Traditional pressure cookers have evolved to add computer programs and use electricity. These electric pressure cookers are a popular appliance, but not everyone who owns one is comfortable using it. **Cookin' in an Instant** is a beginner series to develop basic skills and increase confidence with electric pressure cooking. The six-week series was presented in the spring, summer, and fall, with participants attending virtual 30-minute lunch-and-learns. Each lesson in the series discussed a feature of electric pressure cooking, with a recipe assigned as homework. An average of 48 adults signed up each season, with an average of 14 attending live classes. Attendees were encouraged to post photos of their homework recipes each week to a private online group, sharing successes and challenges they experienced.

I was one of the people in class whose cooker was still in the box. I learned to face my fears and get over them.

PARTICIPANT, COOKIN' IN AN INSTANT



20

Participants responded to survey



90%

Use their pressure cooker more



95%

Have more confidence using pressure cooker

I enjoyed having a weekly goal of making something new in my pressure cooker. I tried several recipes that I probably would have skipped past if they hadn't been recommended. PARTICIPANT, COOKIN' IN AN INSTANT

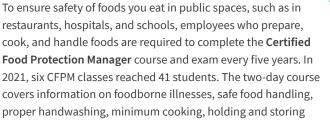
Staff Earns Awards

The statewide nutrition and wellness team, including Caitlin Mellendorf, won the Team Excellence Award at Illinois Extension Annual Conference for its work on the Fill Your Pantry: Home Food Preservation webinar series and the 31 Days of Food Preservation social media campaign addressing safe home food preservation.



Pictured left to right: Diane Reinhold, Mary Liz Wright, Susan Glassman, Lisa Peterson, Jenna Smith, Kristin Bogdonas, and Caitlin Mellendorf.

Prioritizing food safety education



temperatures, and more. The average test score was 86, with a

passing score of 75.

Foodborne illnesses cost society an estimated \$36 billion annually, with an average cost of \$3,630 per illness. Food safety is challenged everywhere from the field to the kitchen. Safe growing, handling, and preservation practices can help reduce the social and economic impact of foodborne illness.







Bird Watching

The Second Saturdays Regulars bird watching group continued to gather. This group has been going strong since March 2019. Each month, the group chooses a different bird watching site within DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties. They saw 31 species at Allerton Park in May 2021 and completed three bird counts.

The survival of our planet depends on the quality of our water, land, and air. These shared resources must be managed through sustainable practices that support ecological balance. We must take steps now to effectively steward these resources for generations to come.



Master Naturalists focus on community

Community education efforts resumed this year for Master Naturalists. Our Glacier's Edge Master Naturalist volunteers began the year with the annual Carolyn Mason Education Day. *Out Your Back Door* focused on the many ways to bring nature into a yard. Twenty community members attended, which marked the first in-person event since 2020.

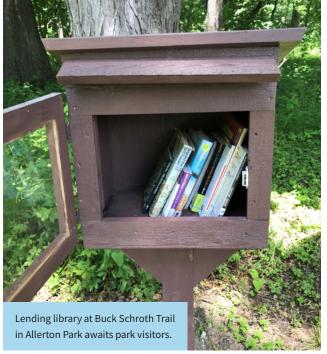
Outdoor events, including the Festival of Spring, Monarch Madness, and the Hummingbird Festival, provided an opportunity to set up nature-related activity tables to interact with children. A lending library at Allerton Park stocked with nature books ensured that all ages had access to educational resources. Plans to add a lending library to a trail at Rock Springs Conservation Area are also underway.



22 Master Naturalist Volunteers



2,366 Volunteer Hours









Best practices improve productivity

The **Regenerative Grazing webinar** attracted local and state-wide attention. This program featured two regenerative graziers explaining the how and why of this adaptive management grazing method. A tour led by the two graziers allowed webinar participants to view the grazing operations. The webinar has been posted on YouTube and has had 300 total views.

Whether large commercial agriculture operations, small farms, or community and backyard gardens, the future of our food supply relies on use of practices that boost production and capacity. Growers at all levels benefit from effective, efficient, and sustainable approaches to cultivating produce, crops, and livestock that feed their families, communities, and the world.

Proper pruning is an important part of ensuring healthy fruit trees. Extension Educator, Doug Gucker taught a two-part fruit tree pruning workshop in March. The program included an hour of classroom instruction on the basics of fruit tree pruning followed by an hour of pruning practice at a nearby orchard. Twenty-one participants attended the workshops.



90% Would change current pruning practices



80% Gained more knowledge



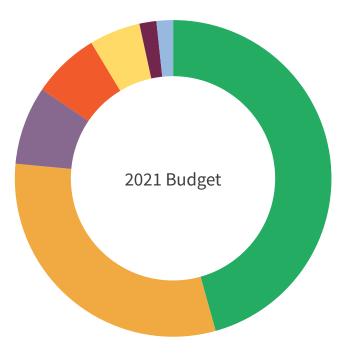
Recognizing the Impact of Stress

Stress is a fact of life for farmers and their families. Agriculture ranks among the most hazardous industries. Financial problems, uncertain market prices, farm transfer issues, production challenges, isolation, and more are common worries for those in the agriculture business. Cheri Burcham, Extension family life educator serving Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Moultrie, and Shelby counties, and Doug Gucker, local foods and small farms educator from DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties, facilitated the virtual program *Weathering the Storm in Agriculture: How to Cultivate a Productive Mindset*. This joint effort educated local agencies on the available resources for this at-risk population.



Even before the global pandemic's new social, economic, and life challenges, mental health was a growing concern. Illinois residents of all ages and walks of life need to know where to turn for resources to help cope with the daily stressors that threaten mental health and wellbeing.





The 2021 operating budget totaled \$1.5 million. Extension is funded through a combination of local, county, state, and federal dollars,* which are returned to the community through educational programming.

\$713,022	County Board
\$481,034	State County Board Match
\$125,000	Program Income
\$107,324	State Income
\$81,450	Gifts/Donations/Grants
\$27,030	Local Sources
\$26,402	4-H Premiums

 $^{^{\}star}$ No federal funds were budgeted for use in 2021.

2021-2022 Extension Council Members

Angi Carter,	Kristi Pyatt,	Jennifer Suckow,
DeWitt County	Piatt County	Macon County
Sonya Anthony,	Tayisha Nelson,	David White,
Macon County	Macon County	Piatt County
Nancy Derby,	Kallee Steinkamp,	April Gum,
Macon County	Piatt County	DeWitt County
Ben Suckow,	Megan Murphy,	Kathi Drozs,
Macon County	Piatt County	DeWitt County
Merry Lanker,	Brett Brown,	Morgan Drozs,
Macon County	Macon County	DeWitt County
Karen Halicki,	Ray Spencer,	Jerry Edwards,
Macon County	Piatt County	Piatt County

Online Outreach



5,208

Recipients of 128 Extension and 4-H newsletters



26,206 Website views



3,542

Followers of 6 Facebook pages



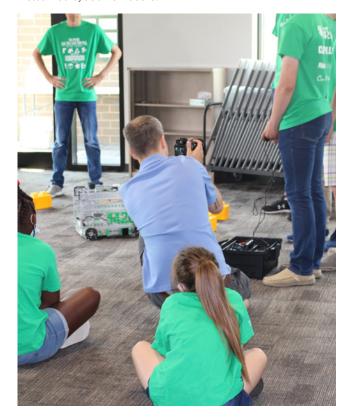
285

Hours of video watched

Extension explored new avenues to reach audiences in 2021. WAND and our staff created three commercials: one for 4-H volunteer recruitment, one for 4-H membership, and one marketing the local Extension program. All three commercials aired during the summer Olympics.

A consistent social media presence was maintained this year. Accounts on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook showed increases in followers.

Staff continued creating videos for virtual programming and program updates. An email marketing campaign shared programming and educational information. The unit website welcomed 6, 986 new users.



SPONSORS / PARTNERS

4-H Memorial Camp • ABC Preschool • Agriculture Watershed Institute • Allerton Park & Retreat Center • Allerton Public Library • Anna Waters Head Start Archer Daniels Midland • Argenta-Oreana Public Library • Argenta-Oreana School District • Atwood-Hammond Library Atwood-Hammond School District • Baby TALK Early Head Start • Barclay Public Library • Bement Chamber of Commerce • Bement Public Library Bement School District • Blue Mound Memorial Library • Blue Ridge School District • Blue Ridge Township Library • Boys & Girls Club of Decatur Bryant Cottage • Bushel and Peck Wild Flowers • C.H. Moore Homestead • DeWitt County • Carriage House Apartments • Central Illinois Aerospace Cerro Gordo School District • Chi Xi Omega • Cisco Community Center • City of Monticello • Clinton Community • School District Clinton Community YMCA • Clinton Journal • Coffee Connection • Connie's Country Greenhouse • County Market • Crossing Healthcare Decatur Day Care Center • Decatur Family YMCA • Decatur Housing Authority • Decatur Park District • Decatur Public Library • Decatur Public Schools Decatur Public Schools Foundation • Decatur-Macon County Opportunities • DeWitt County 4-H Foundation • DeWitt County Coalition DeWitt County Farm Bureau • DeWitt County • Friendship Center • DeWitt County Housing Authority • DeWitt County SWCD DeWitt-Piatt Bi-County Health Department • Double D Farms • DOVE, Inc. • Ecumenical Food Pantry of Piatt County • Empowerment Opportunity Center Exelon • Faith in Action • Farm Progress Show • Farmer City Public Library • First Baptist Church • First Christian Church, Monticello First Mid-Illinois Bank, Monticello • First National Bank, Clinton • First State Bank, Monticello • Forsyth Public Library • Fox Run Farms • Girl Scouts Girl Scouts of Clinton • Good Samaritan Inn/Mercy Gardens • Holly's Country Kitchen • Homework Hangout • Hope Welty Public Library Illinois 4-H Foundation • Illinois Association of Home and Community Extension • Illinois Public Media • Kirby Medical Center • Lake Fork Sportsman Club Macon County 4-H & Extension Foundation • Macon County Ag in the Classroom • Macon County Conservation District • Macon County Fairgrounds Macon County Farm Bureau • Macon County Obesity Prevention Coalition • Macon County SWCD • Macon Resources, Inc. • Maddox Sweet Corn Farm Maroa Public Library • Maroa-Forsyth School District • McGrath Plants and Produce • Meridian School District • Mike Heiniger Photography Millikin University • Monticello Christian Academy • Monticello Farmer's Market • Monticello School District • Mothers of Preschoolers Mt. Zion District Library • Neighborhood Care Center - Clinton • New Vision Food Pantry • Northeast Community Fund • Now Decatur • Old Kings Orchard Oxford House • Piatt County Farm Bureau • Piatt County Journal-Republican • Piatt County SWCD • Piatt Mental Health Center • PrairiErth Reasonable Services Food Pantry • RFD Radio Network • Richland Community College • Rural King • Salvation Army • Save-A-Lot - Clinton South Macon Public Library • State Bank of Bement • Take Off Pounds Sensibly • The Herald & Review • The Vault • The Woods Apartments Topflight Grain Co-operative • Tractor Supply - Clinton • Tractor Supply - Monticello • Triple M Farm • U of I Plant Biology Greenhouse United Way of Decatur & Mid-Illinois • Vespasian Warner Public Library • WAND TV • Warner Hospital and Health Services • Waynesville Township Library WCIA TV • Webster-Cantrell Hall • Wee Folks Daycare • Weldon Public Library • Weldon Springs State Park • WHOW Radio • Willow Tree Missions WPXN Radio • Youth with a Positive Direction

OFFICE INFORMATION

DeWitt County Extension

8425 Katie Rd. Clinton, IL 61727 (217) 935-5764 Fax: (217) 935-8932 Monday - Friday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM

Macon County Extension

3351 N. President Howard Brown Blvd. Decatur, IL 62521 (217) 877-6042 Fax: (217) 877-4564 Monday - Friday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM

Piatt County Extension

210 S. Market St. Monticello, IL 61856 (217) 762-2191 Fax: (217) 762-2703 Monday - Friday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM

ONLINE



go.illinois.edu/dmp



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DeWitt, Macon & Piatt Counties



/UIExten DMP

Cover photos: Master Gardeners masquerading as monarchs at Monarch Madness, 4-H youth spending time in the swine barn, Shoppers at Macon County Master Gardener Plant Sale, and CloverBud showing her First Aid kit made at Shipwrecked event.

Illinois Extension

College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences
University of Illinois, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Local Extension Councils Cooperating.
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.



If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, please contact the event coordinator. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your needs.

The Illinois Nutrition Education Programs are funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture by the Director, Cooperative Extension Service, and University of Illinois.