



UNIVERSITY
of NEW HAMPSHIRE

Cooperative Extension

Cheshire County UNHCE

Cheshire County UNH Cooperative Extension is part of a statewide network of county offices bringing the University of New Hampshire resources directly to the people who live and work in Cheshire County. Cheshire County Extension is backed by more than 30 campus-based Extension specialists.

UNH Cooperative Extension provides research-based education and information to New Hampshire citizens, enhancing their ability to make informed decisions that strengthen youth, families and communities, sustain natural resources and improve the economy.

County government in partnership with UNH Cooperative Extension

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Dean and Director, UNHCE

Support for Cooperative Extension Makes Positive Impacts in Cheshire County

Selected Highlights

County Investment

■ For the \$147,219 investment Cheshire County makes in UNH Cooperative Extension programs, an additional \$288,212 of state and federal funds are invested directly toward county staff, programming, administrative costs, and computer support for Cheshire County Extension.

Agricultural Productivity

■ To date, a total of 75 people have participated in the "Energy for Food" series of workshops held in conjunction with Hannah Grimes and the Cheshire County Conservation District. These workshops have focused on energy conservation for greenhouses, alternative energy sources for agricultural operations, and extending the growing season. A greenhouse grower reports that after attending one of the workshops, he insulated the kneewalls in his greenhouses and installed a digital thermostat, and he noticed immediate savings in heating costs.

■ Fifteen area producers participated in on-farm food safety sessions, learning about common food safety issues on farms and how to address them. Participants said they intend to make changes to improve food safety, including water testing, improved animal control practices, installation of sanitizers, and improved field sanitation.

■ Participants who attended the Westmoreland Corn and Forage meeting indicated they intend to use what they

learned to improve crop production by adjusting planting populations, looking more closely at hybrid information, improving soil management, and keeping better track of soil test results.

Nutrition Connections

■ Nutrition Connections is a trusted source of information for consumers, helping them make informed choices about household food purchases and meal planning. More than 90 percent of participants use one or more food assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), WIC, the School Lunch Program, food pantries, or community meal sites.

■ In 2012, nearly 150 adults learned about nutrition, cooking, and food resource management in Extension programs. They gained awareness and knowledge related to healthy eating and food choices and the benefits of physical activity. They changed behaviors and improved skills in preparing healthy foods, family meal planning, managing food dollars, healthy weight management practices, and food safety.

■ Five hundred children and youth throughout the county participated in Nutrition Connections programs at schools and other youth programs. They cooked, learned about healthy eating, and tried new foods.

■ Over a dozen local agencies and organizations referred limited-resource clients to Nutrition Connections. These agencies don't have staff to do the work done by Extension.



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Food and Agriculture

■ A feed operation worked with Extension and a dairy in Vermont on an on-farm research project looking at double cropping small grains with silage corn as an alternative source of forages. This effort resulted in lower feed costs, which in turn improved the farm's profitability. Instead of purchasing feed from a farm with less than satisfactory quality and/or prices, they now feel they have the flexibility to work with other farms in the area. They credit Extension with providing expertise to guide their cropping experiments, with helping to facilitate conversations between the two farms, and with providing the means to conduct on-farm research, reducing the financial risk for both farms.

■ Participants in the Corn and Forage meeting in Westmoreland gained useful knowledge of forage harvesting practices to preserve feed quality, and weed ecology principles that can result in better crop yields with less reliance on herbicides.

■ Sixty-three people participated in the Energy for Food programs offered by Extension in association with the County Conversation District and Hannah Grimes in Troy, Jaffrey, and Fitzwilliam. Participants improved their understanding of energy-efficient and innovative methods for crop storage, post-harvest handling of produce, value-added processing, and irrigation.

Youth and Family

■ The Cheshire County 4-H program significantly impacts the lives of youth, volunteers, and their communities. The 4-H experience provides a foundation for future success, as youth develop and practice critical life skills and become more independent. A Walpole 4-H member said, "4-H's greatest strength is that it allows us to make our own mistakes and to learn from them, to shape the course of our own futures, while offering us the opportunity to learn from each other, wherever we are from. I will continue to look back on my time in 4-H and learn from it. I will take with me lessons of responsibility, acceptance that failures happen, and a drive to always do the best I can, and be the best I can be."

■ Two hundred volunteers dedicated more than 10,000 hours, helping youth build life, leadership, and citizenship skills. The cost benefit of volunteer time alone to Cheshire County is \$212,900, based on the Independent Sector volunteer value per hour.

■ Youth and adults working together spent more than 2,000 hours completing more than 50 community service projects, giving them experience "making a difference" for others.

Natural Resources

■ Cooperative Extension's Natural Resources program staff work with landowners to help them maximize the economic, educational and ecological benefits of their land. In one year alone, Cheshire County residents received more than \$3 million from selling timber and other wood products, and towns received more than \$300,000 in timber tax revenue (NH DRA).

■ In the past 12 months, more than 900 individuals, organizations, communities, and businesses received educational information about forest/tree insects and diseases, environmental issues, current-use and forest law enquiries, and other forest resource issues.

■ Five hundred forty-seven individuals attended more than 21 workshops focusing on the importance and wise stewardship of our region's forests.

■ The Extension field specialist also partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency to help start cost-share programs. These provide cost-share dollars that improve and protect forestland, wildlife habitat and water quality, acting as a catalyst for New Hampshire's forest products industry.

■ In 2011-2012, the Cheshire County forest resources field specialist worked to allocate more than \$37,000 for emergency forest restoration work for 2010 wind storm damage areas in Harrisville. This will help forestland owners cover the cost of debris removal and storm cleanup.

■ In 2012, 25 landowners received \$65,665 to pay for forest management plans and inventories from cost-sharing programs and grants. These plans cover 4,760 acres of the county's privately-owned forestland.

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